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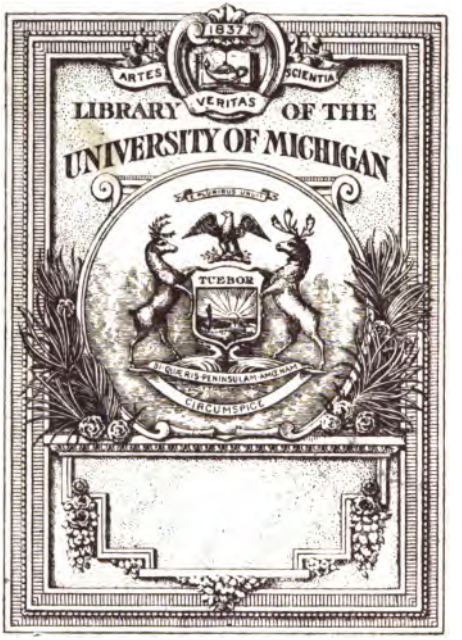
# The UNPOPULAR HISTORY of the UNITED STATES by UNCLE SAM HIMSELF

HARRIS DICKSON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# THE UNPOPULAR HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

# THE
# UNPOPULAR HISTORY
## OF THE UNITED STATES
## BY UNCLE SAM HIMSELF

AS RECORDED IN UNCLE SAM'S OWN WORDS

BY

HARRIS DICKSON

NEW YORK
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PUBLISHERS

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## FOREWORD

This is not a piece of literature, but merely the straightforward heart-to-heart talk of one American with other Americans. In the ultimate we all love the truth, and dare to face it. This is the truth as believed, and now acted upon by the best minds in our country.

It was prepared in Washington City when our capital was one of the most picturesque and busy in the world. Khaki lads line the streets; officers come and go upon their silent errands. Distinguished commissions from our allies hold daily conference with American officials, welding our joint resources, and warning us against their errors.

Thousands of private citizens—able, self-sacrificing, patriotic men—have flocked to Washington, placing their talents at the nation's disposal. They are not glory seekers.



318260

Few of their names are known. They only ask to serve; and they do serve—efficiently.

The net effect produced upon me—and this is what I want to tell you—is that things are being done, excellently well done. From our manifold insufficiencies we have learned.

This is intended not as a slur, but as a spur for us to do what the United States can surely do, when once our people become aroused. The United States needs our best, humanity needs it; nor shall we be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

HARRIS DICKSON.

Washington, D. C.,
July 4th, 1917.

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# INTRODUCTION

For three years the world has been talking about war. So has Uncle Sam. Everybody listens. So do I. Yet, while listening with both ears, I fail to comprehend. I know absolutely nothing of military science. Do you?

Highly specialized officers have explained to me the object of certain mass formations, problems of range and parabola, and remaining velocities. All of which goes right over my head. War news and technical discussions produce little or no effect upon me except that of helpless horror. And that is how the average American feels, although dimly realizing that the life or death of his country, and of world-wide republican institutions, hang in the balance. The average American is eager and anxious to know, so he can *do* something, and do it well.

Our Uncle Sam, being a plain-spoken and

practical person, admits that he generally makes a muss of soldiering, and has set his head to find out why. Uncle Sam has been lying awake at nights ruminating over the salty facts. Having learned better, he does better. He is doing much better now, and means to get ahead of the best before he plows this furrow to the end. Uncle Sam can accomplish whatever he tries, and, believe me, he is trying.

But he needs help, help from you and help from me, from every loyal citizen in the United States. Therefore Uncle Sam desires that all of us should consider what has gone wrong in the past, so that we may avoid the same blunders in the future. Just now we have the errors of our allies to warn us, and no legislator with mule sense should set his foot in a hole when there is a sign board standing right before his nose to point it out.

The average American does not understand war. This present affair is so prodigious that it passes beyond his mental jurisdiction. As for myself, martial science must be reduced

to words of one syllable, or I don't get it.

It goes against the grain to accept statements that we hate to believe, facts that jostle us out of pet notions which are the pride and heritage of every school boy. Patriotic speakers are constantly declaiming "Paul Revere," "Ring Out for Liberty" and "Barbara Frietchie," but never disturb the fakes and the fabrications.

I was a grown man, thirty years old, struggling to hoe off my beard with a safety razor, before it dawned upon me that the military history of my country had not been one long unbroken series of Star Spangled victories. Like all other school boys I had been fed up on 4th of July orations. I believed in fairies, in Jack the Giant Killer, in the Boys of '76. I almost believed that a lone and gray-haired farmer with a fife, and a bloody rag around his head, flanked by two small drummer boys, had chased the British army from off our sacred continent. I half-way believed that. Did you?

The truth is that Uncle Sam has abandoned

slanders to be resented and refuted, but are expressly endorsed by our own government, and furnish the most potent reasons for casting aside the volunteer system so prolific of disaster.

Each detail might be verified by page references to General Upton's work, but it is considered better not to confuse and complicate so brief a synopsis.

For the purpose of further informing the people as to this radical change of their military system, Uncle Sam has given me his reasons in language so simple and direct that even you and I may understand.

# I

## UNCLE SAM GETS STARTED

Now, my son—Uncle Sam rolled up his sleeves and started—sit down and plug away on that typewriter while I talk. Make your machine rattle the same as chickens picking corn off a tin roof. I'm a right tolerable long-winded windmill, and sizzling with things that must be got out of my system.

The woods are full of folks—and the cities, too—full of good folks who don't realize that

we are having a war, a strictly business war that will spare no home in the land. They must realize it, and realize it right now. I've got a job for every man, woman and child in America, a job to be learned and done—efficiently.

They don't see it yet. They have got the notion that nobody dares tackle them, that we are some punkins in a scrap, and can whip both sets of allies in our spare time, say, between breakfast and dinner, which makes a fellow strut and feel good, but lays him liable to a jolt.

Our folks have been thinking it was not necessary for us to do anything, and of course Congress trailed along behind. That is why nothing had been done up to a year ago. But the people are waking up, and putting alarm clocks under Congress. Mind you I am not blaming anybody in particular. I am just saying what's what.

Our people don't know because they have not been told at all, or been told wrong, and that's the main trouble. School books teach

our children that we have won all of our wars, just as easy as falling off a log, and if a foreign army invaded America, grandfather would reach around, get his scythe blade, and clean 'em up.

One time I knew a justice of the peace to be elected on the platform that he could take a lightning bug, on the end of a corn cob, and bluff the machine-made armies of Europe into the Atlantic Ocean. Maybe he could. But machine-made armies won't fight with corn cobs and lightning bugs. Rules have changed.

Plenty of grown men believe that still. It is part of public opinion, and helps to shape the policy of this nation.

Some of these days I am going to jump on those "popular school histories" and put them out of business. Publishers print 'em to make money, and folks won't pay good money for medicine that tastes bad. Just call this the "Unpopular History," and maybe we can't give it away. But I want to tell the truth to every fifteen-year-old boy in the United States, want to make every member

of Congress read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it.

Listen, my son, listen to a plain talk, straight from the shoulder.

We Americans love bunk. I know what I am talking about. We do love bunk. We just nationally eat it up—a stuff that's not too bright or good for Yankee nature's daily food. Of all the bunk that we are fed upon, none is grabbed more greedily than the 4th of July oration about our fighting citizenship, and a rush to arms. We are the fighting citizenship; we are the patriotic rushers. We are the original patentees, progenitors, and extemporaneous guardians of freedom! We are IT!

Nothing tickles our American vanity so much as being patted on the back for natural born warriors who can lick the world just for pastime. The perspiring 4th of July orator pumps us full of heroic hot air, which pleasingly distends our hides with manhood, and we elect the orator to Congress. He goes to Congress on that platform, and sticks by it—

which is good politics. Poets sing of triumphant liberty and school books teach of tyrants trembling before the musketry of embattled farmers. Thereupon the spectacled historian comes along to clinch these patriotic fakes with unassailable statistics. All of which is strictly for home consumption. Exported bunk does not pass at par. Soldiers beyond the seas know a darn sight better, and they'll show us better if we don't wake up.

## II

## UNCLE SAM KEEPS GOING

This bluster and brag about licking the world with both hands tied behind us is the most dangerous sort of bunk. Every chancellery in Europe smiles at it.

Suppose we start at the very beginning. To the forefathers of this republic a standing army typified all the oppression from which they had escaped. Professional soldiers to them represented the pomp of dynasties and

the pride of kings, a class apart from, and antagonistic to, the people—a class that marched at the nod of tyrannical monarchs. None of that for us in free America.

We built our military fabric upon an entirely different theory—a small standing army to be used as a nucleus around which the aforesaid fighting citizenship would rally. We believed implicitly in the volunteer. Up to the passage of our present selective draft law, we figured that our ranks would be crowded with youngsters who were craving to fight.

Now we have the selective draft upon our statute books, but no law gets full force and effect unless the people understand and approve. We have changed our entire military system because we had started wrong, and the people ought to know why.

At the beginning we planned that a small body of volunteers should constitute our regular army; the balance, held as a reserve force or militia, remaining under control of the states. Militiamen and officers alike are gen-

erally untrained, the officers being popular fellows elected by their comrades and commissioned by the Government.

I am not saying a word against these volunteers, the finest youngsters that ever trod shoe leather, the best fighting material on earth. But no matter how brave and patriotic the individual lad may be, he needs long and skillful training.

This, my son, was the germ of our military policy. It has been tried for more than a hundred years, in assorted wars, foreign, domestic, Indian. Educated military men got their dose of it—by the painful method—and say it is the worst system ever devised. But some way or other we have always managed, by main strength and awkwardness, to scramble out on top, which has made folks think that as a nation we are invincible. My son, the very surest way to get life pummeled out of you is to feel that there's no use exerting yourself. The other fellow exerts himself, and it is all over but the ambulance.

Did you ever sit out in front of a cross-

roads store and hear the boys talk? I mean the boys with whiskers, whittling on a dry-goods box? They are my kind of folks. I was born with them, reared with them. I know what kind of flapjacks his wife makes; know what kind of water he has in his well; I drink out of the same gourd, and know the name of his dog. I deny flatfootedly that there is any better American alive than the Iowa farmer, or the Virginia farmer, or the Texas farmer. I speak his language, I know what he is thinking about, and I wish I could talk to him face to face.

Most of them have got the same idea, not only the boys at the crossroads store, but business men, school teachers, lawyers. Just hang around and listen to what they say: "Look what we did to the British in the Revolution—a plenty." "How Old Hickory cleaned 'em up at New Orleans." "Over-ran Mexico before you could say scat."

"Of course those foreign governments have big armies, but we have individual initiative.

Our lads know how to ride and shoot. That's the thing that counts."

You hear that kind of talk all over the country—especially about individual initiative.

Your Uncle Samuel used to think that same way, until developments in modern warfare knocked it out of his head. Modern warfare is a question of team work. You can't accomplish anything nowadays by every fellow pulling his own way. Where would the Giants, or the Phillies, or the Red Sox be without organization? You could put a thousand fine individuals into the diamond, and nine trained players plus team-work, would play rings around them. Soldiers, like baseball teams, can't get anywhere on an individual basis. That's another kink that we Americans must get out of our heads—individualism. We are habitually intolerant of restraint. We resent the slightest encroachment upon our personal privilege to do as we please. If the notion strikes us to play at soldiering, very well, soldiers we will play—whenever we get ready and for just as long

as it suits us. The average American having volunteered for a few months, frequently carries this idea with him and stops to ask questions, before he obeys an order. Individualism is his most petted possession. He argues that we have been victorious in five foreign wars on this basis of individual initiative, and sees no sense in quitting a good thing. Lots of people talk that way. It's one of the biggest troubles in this country.

## III

## THE FICTION OF INVINCIBLE MILITIA

I AM going to tell you some facts that will make you think. I don't care a hang what you think—to begin with. I don't care what any American thinks, if he will only think at all. I've got a pig-headed faith that Americans are going to think right before they get done thinking.

Our tradition of the invincible militia and the victorious Minutemen had its birth at

Bunker Hill. Frenzied orators, fiery poets and solemn school books have repeatedly assured us that a few dozen stalwart plowboys routed the redcoat army with a loss of about 1,054 men. This temporary success led to a practically unbroken series of disasters. The enthusiasm of Bunker Hill crystallized into a complacent state of public mind, and one and forty years of equally complacent military laws. From that day forward our national existence has depended upon a handful of regulars and a hope—a hope that, at the sound of Freedom's bugle trump, vast numbers of conquering citizens would rush to arms.

Revolutionary leaders framed their plans upon this rush, and, my son, the recruits didn't rush. That's the truth about it. If you don't believe me, just ask George Washington, who made quite a considerable reputation in his neighborhood for telling the truth. At the opening of the Revolution Washington thought just like the balance of us, that patriots would flock to the banners

of freedom and hurl the tyrant's minions from our shores. But the flocking and the hurling went on mighty slow.

Some way or other the New England Minutemen contrived to get in the first lick, striking the British at Lexington and Concord Bridge. Those wrathy farmers chased the redcoats for more than twenty miles. Picking them off like robins from behind trees and stone walls, they killed and wounded 223 soldiers, with a loss to themselves of 88 men. That's what started us down the wrong road; it looked too easy.

Three days later, April 22, 1775, the Congress of Massachusetts resolved that an army of 30,000 men was necessary for defense of the colony, and attempted to raise at once thirteen thousand six hundred by voluntary enlistments of men who had got a taste of victory and ached to finish the job.

Right here and now I want to call your attention to the vicious practice which Massachusetts then adopted of giving a Captain's commission to any one who could enroll a

company of 59 men, and making a Colonel of the first politician who could get together ten such companies. This system has been employed, without exception, at the beginning of all our wars. You can easily see how that works; a hail-fellow-well-met is put in command. The hustling life insurance agent probably becomes Captain. The shrewd political boss gets a Colonel's commission, while the educated officer, who is not a good mixer, is elected to stay at home. And do you know, my son, that we have never got away from that system?

The victors of Concord and Lexington assembled near Boston without organization, and only by courtesy recognizing a common commander. Old Israel Putnam had gumption enough to protect his men behind rail breastworks, saying: "These Americans are never afraid for their heads: they only think of their legs. Shelter their legs and they will fight forever."

And they did fight; they put up a powerful hot scrap on a powerful hot day, June 17,

beating off three assaults by British regulars, who lost more than a thousand men.

Congress immediately authorized the enlistment of 20,370 men for service in the neighborhood of Boston. They apprehended great trouble in keeping the patriot ranks thinned down to that meager stand. The first shot at Concord Bridge had rung around the world, according to an optimistic poet. Colonial martyrs lay dead. Redcoats went tramping across the land, and the colonists were supposed to be ablaze with indignation. Yet, at the end of a month, only 966 volunteers had presented themselves. That was not much of a rush. My son, you ought to have seen how beautifully they restrained their enthusiasm. Their rush was most deliberate and decorous.

Now don't get cranky, and suppose that I am throwing rocks at anybody's venerable New England ancestors. Your own venerable ancestors in Virginia and Georgia did precisely the same thing. What I'm talking about is the bad system.

## IV

## THE RUSH THAT NEVER RUSHED

By December 15, 1775, only 5,917 men had enlisted, not quite a third. George Washington didn't like this and spoke his mind: "I am sorry to mention the egregious want of public spirit. Instead of pressing to be engaged in the cause of their country, which I vainly flattered myself would be the case, I find we are likely to be deserted at the most critical time."

There were splendid examples of patriotic unselfishness. Twelve companies of riflemen reported near Boston, some of them having marched a distance of 800 miles. These were the first troops raised upon authority of the Continental Congress, and were soon recognized as the six best corps in the army. In spite of cold and starvation and suffering they fought throughout the war, and formed the backbone of those gallant troops which finally achieved our independence. But they had eight years' service, my son, and became veterans.

The Continental Congress, bear in mind, had no authority whatever to raise or pay or equip a single soldier. Congress could merely pass resolutions and appeal to the sovereign states.

Minutemen volunteered, quite a bunch of them. They came in a minute and stayed about a minute. Each day Washington had a different army from the one of yesterday, and generally smaller. Which explains his letter of November 28, 1775:

"After the last of this month our lines will be so weakened that the Minutemen and militia must be called in for their defense. And these, being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy what little subordination I have been laboring to establish."

Recruiting went slower than cold molasses, and Washington himself is authority for the statement that men were "holding back to see what advantages could be gained, and whether or not they could extort a bounty." Every school boy will naturally spurn the suggestion that patriots of the Revolution would put up their services at public auction. But nobody has ever written for the school boy a popular history of the bounty system.

That was not the worst of it. Most of those volunteers engaged for short terms only, and were so fidgety to return home, that some of them left camp ahead of time "getting away with their arms and ammunition."

The Governor to whom Washington wrote these facts expressed his great indignation, adding this illuminating phrase: "The pul

of the New England man beats high for liberty. His engagement in the service he thinks purely voluntary, therefore, when the time for enlistment is out, he thinks himself not holden without further engagement."

Of course, that is the law, a perfectly legal construction to put upon their contract of employment. Nearly one hundred years later we find a similar instance at the first battle of Bull Run.

School boys do not regard George Washington as a chronic complainer. Yet his letters are full of paragraphs like this: "Nothing can surpass the impatience of the troops to get to their firesides. Nearly three hundred of them arrived a few days ago unable to do any duty. But as soon as I administered that grand specific, a discharge, they instantly acquired health, and rather than be detained a few days to cross Lake George, undertook a march of 200 miles with the greatest alacrity."

Doesn't this jar upon your reverential ideals, to picture 300 heroes of the Revolu-

tion limping around camp until Washington told them to go home, when they suddenly became able to march the distance from New York to Washington?

In consequence of slow voluntary enlistments, and the promptitude with which the short time recruit hiked himself homeward, it was considered expedient to try the worst possible makeshift—a bounty. The unpalatable truth is that by the middle of 1775, before the glorious Declaration of Independence, it had become necessary to pay men so much money for volunteering, making mercenaries of the first soldiers of this republic. On the 6th day of December, 1775, the Continental Congress passed this resolution:

"That the charge of bounty in the accounts exhibited by the Colony of Rhode Island against the United Colonies be not allowed."

Something had to be done. Washington recognized the failure of the volunteer system and suggested "coercive measures" to fill his regiments. But feeble Congress was afraid to take such a radical step; instead of devis-

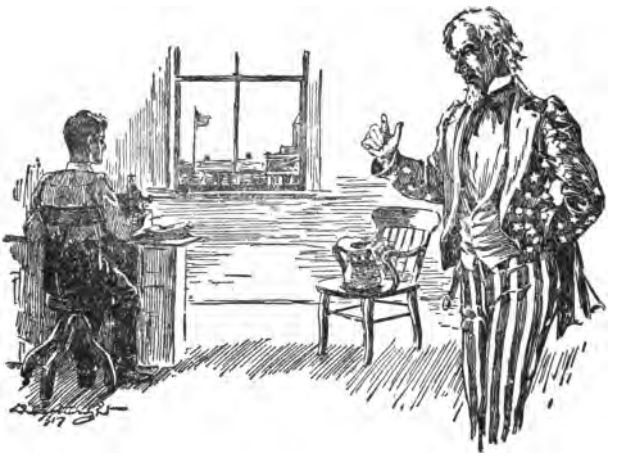
ing a plan of universal service it tried the more popular scheme of spurring patriotism with cash, and began bidding for men under the bounty system. Up, and up and up the climbing prices went. Four dollars bid! Six dollars and sixty-six cents! Ten dollars bid! By 1778 ruling quotations had reached $20 and 100 acres of land. But the rush did not occur. Something else did occur. Bounties made it impossible to get voluntary recruits, and before the end of 1777 Virginia and Massachusetts both had recourse to the draft—conscription, compulsion, universal service, or whatever you are pleased to call it. The states bidding for men against the Congress caused large numbers to desert and go home to grab the greater bounty. By 1779 the bounty had increased to $200 to any able bodied recruit who would enlist for the war. Then New Jersey offered $250, in addition to the $200, the clothing and land allowed by Congress. The Virginia Council raised the limit to $750, in lieu of all other bounties.

This created great dissatisfaction among

the men who had previously enlisted at the cut rate of $4, $6.66 and $10. To keep them in good humor, and in service, Congress granted a back bounty of $100 each.

Under these increasing bounties our armies in the field steadily decreased from 89,661 in 1776 to 29,340 in 1781. During that period we had employed nearly four hundred thousand men. Fewer than 30,000 now remained in the ranks. Desertions became so numerous that early in 1779 it was necessary for Congress to recommend a punishment of fine and whipping, think of it—whipping—for all who should knowingly harbor a deserter.

So much for this Revolutionary rush to arms which didn't rush. The scramble for men was like the Irishman's idea of a fox hunt. Seeing the scarlet hunters racing and chasing, and trying to catch the fox, he remarked, "Begod, the dom baste is hell to catch, and ain't worth a dom after you catch him."



## V

## WHAT THE SHORT-TERM MILITIA DID

It was like pulling hen's teeth to secure the short-term militiamen. Now we shall see what they accomplished while actually in service. And let me say again, over and over, that I mean to cast no slur upon those individual men; what they did was common to short-term untrained recruits in all countries, at all times, among all peoples.

In 1775 Washington had 17,000 men under

his command, 14,500 of whom were fit for duty. The effective redcoats did not exceed 6,500, yet the Father of His Country, with twice their force, dared not hazard an attack. Why? Because Washington was himself a soldier, and knew better. Although having great advantage in quantity he was over-matched in quality. The British were trained and disciplined and organized—a compact force; the Americans scarcely hung together as a mob. Bear in mind, that one group of men may be the lowest of cutthroats and plunderers—yet be soldiers. Another group, inspired by lofty purposes and highest ideals, may be no more than a mob. It is not patriotism—nor courage, but discipline and training, that marks the distinction which Washington so wisely recognized.

On account of short enlistments and the irresistible homeward tendency of recruits, Revolutionary leaders were repeatedly forced to give battle under adverse circumstances—before the terms of their men expired and left them minus an army. This caused the disas-

ter at Quebec. Impatient militiamen refused to remain and take the fortress by siege, so the gallant General Montgomery risked a premature assault, lost his own life, had sixty Americans killed, and three or four hundred captured.

During 1775 the Colonies maintained at public expense 37,623 men, a force which from want of supplies and organization spent the year in a state of demoralizing inactivity.

The campaign of 1776 opened under heart-breaking conditions. General Washington had entered the conflict with the buoyant hope that his patriotic countrymen would swell the armies of freedom. On January 14th, he wrote:

"Search the volumes of history and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found, namely, to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, without powder, and then to have one army disbanded and another to be raised within the same distance of a reënforced enemy. The same desire to retire into the chim-

ney corner seized the troops from New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts so soon as their time expired, as had wrought upon those of Connecticut, notwithstanding many of them made a tender of their services to continue until the line could be sufficiently strengthened. We are now left with a good deal less than half-raised regiments, and about 5,000 militia, who only stand engaged to the middle of this month, when according to custom they will retire, whether the necessity for their staying be ever so urgent."

What a sickening picture of the steadfast Washington watching Freedom's army dwindle away before his very eyes, shifting and changing like the sands of the desert. Believe me, my son, Father was having a batch of trouble with the children.

Cordially as Washington detested the bounty, which he regarded as the twin brother of desertion, he was now forced to waive all objections, nay, even to urge that $20 or

$30 be paid to "engage men to enlist until January next."

Hold still, my son, drive a peg down, right here, and hitch to this idea: I am speaking of raw militia and not of trained men. Plenty of these recruits—raw as green persimmons to begin with—joined the standard of liberty from the noblest motives. They were brave fellows, with good sand in their craw and could stand punishment—individually. Yet the individual must be trained to make a soldier—or a hoss doctor or anything else—I don't care a thrip how smart he is. Understand me, I'm not posted on military matters myself. When somebody chases me up a tree I call on George Washington. George says:

"To bring men to be well acquainted with the duties of a soldier requires time. To bring them under proper discipline and subordination, not only requires time, but is a work of great difficulty; and in this army, where there is so little distinction between officers and soldiers, it requires an uncommon

degree of attention. Men who are familiarized with danger meet it without shrinking; whereas troops unused to service, often apprehend danger where no danger is."

## VI

## PESTERING FATHER WITH POP-CALLS

The great human heart of Washington beat sympathetically with his people. He understood that men of kindly feelings, fresh from all the tender associations of domestic life, "are not sufficiently fortified to stand the shocking scenes of war. To march over dead men, to hear without concern the groans of the wounded, few men can endure such scenes unless steeled by habit or fortified by military pride."

It pestered Hatter [illegible] pop-call [illegible] blowing out again. [illegible] ried long enough [illegible] had implicit confidence [illegible] willing to leave [illegible] ever got them [illegible] diers to bring off. [illegible] as ever were, and [illegible] good as the men they [illegible] on the globe of equal number. [illegible] officers nor men have [illegible] nation and discipline." [illegible] militia did not [illegible] the same restrictions [illegible] nental regulars, and [illegible] discipline Washington [illegible] ing into his men.

Looking only at the [illegible] Revolution it would have [illegible] maintain fifty [illegible] nentals, rather than [illegible] for the [illegible] Eng[illegible] levies [illegible]

plished nothing, and cost more money than a permanent establishment.

In those days folks held a powerful strong prejudice against a standing army, as being dangerous to liberty. A standing army may be dangerous, but believe me, son, a running militia is worse.

Now get this notion straight in your head: As I have said and will say again, it is not a question of the courage and patriotism of the individual volunteer. Men who were not hardened to seeing their friends shot down beside them, not accustomed to hearing the moans of wounded comrades, simply couldn't stand it, no matter how great their individual courage. Revolutionary volunteers were brothers, sons, and fathers of the Continental regulars, those sturdy and steadfast troops who stuck through it all, from first to last; they became veterans, as good as ever trod shoe leather. Between eight and ten thousand Continentals, starving, freezing, and naked, never thought of giving up throughout that terrible winter at Valley Forge. And

had it not been for this resolute group the cause of libery was lost.

On the other hand, their inefficient brothers of the militia generally spread disorder, mutiny and panic until Washington said that "the militia was more hurtful than helpful to the cause of independence."

Washington had about 8,000 militia of this kind to oppose Lord Howe on Long Island. The British outnumbered him two to one. Washington was beaten. A repulse does not necessarily destroy an army of trained soldiers. A good drubbing may only make a bunch of veterans grit their teeth and stand firmer. It riles 'em. But if you defeat the militia and start 'em to turning tail, they take the route to scatteration. It is mighty pitiful to hear the old General telling about how his troops behaved on this humiliating day. Washington heard the first shots of the battle and galloped to the front. Instead of finding his men fighting valiantly on the battle line, they were flying in every direction, with their officers striving in vain to rally them.

Washington succeeded in stopping the rout for a minute, until a squad of 60 or 70 redcoats appeared in the distance. Then the panic-stricken militia bolted away from their Commander-in-Chief and hustled hot-foot through the woods without even remembering that they carried guns.

A standing army might have stood, but the running militia didn't. They got started, and kept going, going, gone—never halting this side of home. They deserted Washington by companies, by half regiments, almost by whole regiments. On account of their lack of discipline and refusal to submit to any kind of restraint, Father at this time admitted that he had lost confidence in the generality of his troops. As a result of which the British occupied the City of New York.

Washington immediately wrote to Congress that "our liberties must be greatly handicapped, if not entirely lost, if their defense is left to anything but a permanent standing army. I mean, one to exist during the war."

The Commander-in-Chief now faced an entire dissolution of his army, which congregated and separated like the crowds in a moving picture show.

## VII

## THE RUNNING MILITIA

LISTEN to your Uncle Samuel! Human nature does not change. We are mighty near the same kind of white folks to-day. When men get hot in the collar they'll reach around and grab the first weapon they can lay hands on to fight with. After scrapping awhile they get tired and want to quit. That's where discipline comes in. Father used to talk like a Dutch uncle to his children, arguing about

the "nobility of the cause of freedom," "come on boys," all that sort of thing. Nobody disputed a word he said. "Yep, it's a bully good cause; everybody ought to be free. But 'tain't *my* business to fight no more than that other fellow's." They left it pretty much to George.

Now if you've got it well planted in your head, the kind of militia we used during the Revolution, I'll tell you what they did—just a few things.

At Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill they fought like thunderation, on the independent plan. But volunteers and militia are always shortwinded. After that most of 'em sat down for a spell to stretch out and talk it over.

At Quebec, when their terms were expiring, they got so fidgety to go home and look after the crops that they caused the loss of the expedition and the death of General Montgomery.

They scattered on Long Island before Lord Howe like leaves before the wind.

Washington retired from White Plains because he had no dependable troops. The British on their return to New York incidentally captured Fort Washington with 2,000 American prisoners. General Washington was compelled to cross the Delaware with 5,000 troops because his militiamen were disbanding, and he was powerless to make even a show of resistance.

Yet on the 26th of December, by a brilliant surprise of the Hessians at Trenton, Washington with a force of 2,400, captured 900 prisoners without losing a man.

His victory at Princeton ended the campaign with a loss to the British of 400 killed, wounded and prisoners.

My son, folks brag mightily on their Uncle Samuel for a sharp horse trader and tight-fisted Yankee. Maybe so, maybe so, but it appears to me that in managing my army I have been saving at the spigot and losing at the bung. In 1776 I was paying a force of Continentals and militia numbering 89,661

men. My biggest guess at the redcoats is 34,000 men.

With all that force I should have been able to do something. But my fellows were picked up here and there and yonder; and I never kept them hired long enough to get them field broke. There was no way to swarm a big enough bunch in one place at one time to hit the British. The only offensive operations that we felt sufficiently strong to undertake were in the vicinity of Boston, at Trenton and at Princeton. I squandered millions upon millions on short-term recruits who never stayed in ranks long enough to learn which was hay-foot and which was straw-foot, and were not worth their board and keep.

Throughout the Revolution these raw recruits generally had their running gear set on the hair trigger. Our mistakes in the beginning of the war were repeated over and over again, always the same sad story: at Camden the hasty levies stampeded and ran from the first shot, leaving their steadfast Continental comrades to be slaughtered, the

latter losing seventy officers and 2,000 men. This crushing defeat, and the surrender of 5,000 Americans at Charleston—which cost us nearly the whole of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia—were not compensated for by the minor exploits of Marion and Sumter.

Referring to Camden, General Washington wrote: "This event shows the fatal consequences of depending on militia. Regular troops alone are equal to the exigencies of modern war. No militia will ever acquire the habits necessary to resist a regular force. The firmness requisite for the real business of fighting is only to be attained by a constant course of discipline and training."

Excuse me, son, if I cuss once in a while; don't put that down. But I get mad every time I think of General Stevens, at the battle of Cowpens, being forced to place a guard behind his militiamen with orders to shoot the first recruit who left his post. Isn't that a disgraceful proposition for patriots fighting in the cause of freedom?

My boy, I've made a lot of mistakes that I had rather forget. But we are now engaged in a war of such magnitude, such devilish ingenuity, that we must look facts squarely in the face. They are ugly facts, yet you can't blink at 'em, or hide your head in the sand like an ostrich. The ostrich lays himself mighty liable to a rear-end collision. I wish you would tell these facts to every young militiaman in the United States. It won't hurt their feelings. They are beginning to understand. Every youngster who has spent a few weeks in training camp comes to realize that courage, willingness, and the basic qualities of manhood are insufficient—he *must* learn how to handle himself.

The famous Light Horse Harry Lee was a great soldier, and he manfully insisted that "that Government is the murderer of its citizens who sends them into the field uninformed and untaught."

## VIII

## A STRANGER COMES

During the entire Revolutionary War of eight long years, we never whipped the British in but two fights which had the slightest effect in driving them from this continent. Only one of these battles did we gain unaided. At Stillwater we captured General Burgoyne with 5,791 men, the Continentals and militia numbering about 17,000, with a total force present and fit for duty of 13,020. Of these

9,090 were regular Continental soldiers. So that we outnumbered the British at Stillwater about two and a half or three to one. Our only other decisive victory was the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, which we shall discuss presently.

In spite of increasing bounties, and Washington's constant pleading for a good army, his force in New Jersey when the campaign opened in March, 1777, was reduced to 3,000 men of whom 2,000 were militia engaged for no longer than the last of March. And yet the total forces of men employed by us during that year was 68,720 men.

Our wrangling, disjointed Government was just about as futile and disorganized as were our forces in the field. The Articles of Confederation, which created a loosely hung partnership of Colonies, went into effect in July, 1778. This formed a League of Friendship for common defense, the jealous purpose of which was evidently to safeguard the sovereignty of the States, and not to provide a strong Federal government. Individualism

again, and not team work. The Continental Congress had no power to carry on war, to enlist a soldier, to levy taxes, nor to enforce a requisition for money or for men. Instead of vesting the war power in a central government, which alone could insure its vigorous exercise, Congress was nothing more than a consulting body of diplomats with authority to entreat but not to compel. No measures could be taken for common defense except such as were separately sanctioned by nine of the allied sovereignties. My son, I have always heard that a kind-hearted Providence watched over children and fools and the United States. We needed it. But, listen to your Uncle Samuel. Providence has a mighty big job on its hands right now, and we had better learn to crawl and stand ourselves.

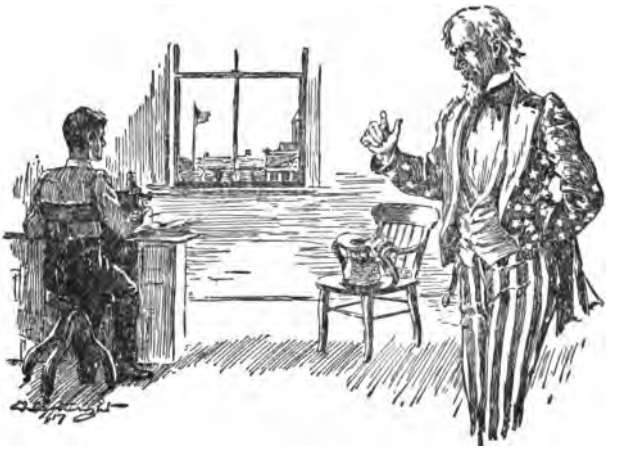
Just imagine what a gabfest the Congress and state legislatures must have had when to the vacillations and delays of Congress itself were added the interminable debates of nine State legislatures. It makes me cuss to think about it. That's why our impotent Congress

passed the buck to George, appointing George Military Dictator. It is not strength, but weakness, which creates dictators over a republic. Here was Washington, preaching the equal rights of all men, yet by his solitary power raising armies and paying them, ruling millions of free men who struggled to attain an ideal of constitutional liberty. Mighty bad precedent, wasn't it, my son? But it was up to somebody to do something, and Congress couldn't.

They got their business in such a jam, before making Washington dictator, that the Commander-in-Chief could not even secure the promotion of an officer serving under him, an officer of known ability and skill. It was a marvel that his army muddled along at all. The Washington monument ought to be twice as high.

This year of '78 brought a very significant factor to our shores, far more significant than anybody dreamed of at the time. A stranger came, the Prussian Baron Steuben, ex-officer of Frederick the Great. Steuben brought a

knowledge of organization and discipline gained from his great master. He was appointed Inspector-General of the army, and set about getting things into shape. A fluent linguist, Steuben swore in fourteen different languages, which was none too many for those recruits. He straightened out even the three months' men, put them under rules and kept them under. He boiled and stewed and roasted those raw recruits until your Uncle Samuel began to get action for the money he was paying. And, my son, we are using to-day much of what we learned from Baron Steuben, using it to fight against the Prussian system which Frederick the Great created.



## IX

## THE BALANCE SHEET OF DISASTER

THE plan of voluntary enlistments, even when puffed up by outrageous bounties, having failed to raise the necessary men, Congress was forced to recommend the draft—a draft for the armies of freedom. Then what happened? To escape conscription shifty patriots began hiring substitutes, hiding behind any old scarecrow that they could shove into the ranks. They even traded for a job

lot of deserters from Burgoyne's army. Think of it! Buying and paying liberty's money to skulkers who had sneaked out of British regiments! Thereupon Father wrote letters and told these proxy patriots exactly what he thought about *them,* and especially about the dangers of substituting as soldiers of the infant republic men who had already given proof of their treacherous dispositions. One of his colonels backed up Father with the proof that every British deserter, except one, had in turn deserted him, stealing properties and accouterments as they left. Anyway, they were impartial deserters.

My son, let me beat into your head something else about this whirligig of volunteer militia. It did not produce an army of soldiers. But as a mill for turning out pensioners it went on grinding day and night. The greatest force of soldiers that Washington could ever get together in one command was 17,000. But after the smoke blew away I had on my hands, in one bunch, an army of 95,753 pensioners.

Let us pass over, charitably, a multitude of such errors, insufficiencies and humiliations, coming to the victory which decided the war. Lord Cornwallis surrendered 7,000 men at Yorktown. The allied French and Americans numbered 16,000 strong, 4,000 of whom were French veterans. Besides, we had 21 French ships of the line. So that in this affair we outnumbered the enemy by nearly two and a half to one, without counting the fleet.

I hate to harp and harp on such discordant strings, but our people ought to know. Plenty of good folks in the towns stick to it that one American patriot can lick ten soldiers of any foreign nation. I think they say ten. We can't do it, and the sooner we learn that, the quicker we'll put ourselves in shape to make the Stars and Stripes respected.

The record of short-term volunteer militia throughout the Revolution was an almost continuous performance of inefficiency, desertions, mutinies, and that particular brand of cowardice which comes from lack of discipline and organization. Not that the recruits

were personal cowards. They had merely failed to learn the lesson of cohesive courage. During those eight disastrous years we employed nearly 400,000 men—practically ten times the redcoats—gaining only two victories of consequence—Stillwater and Yorktown. With overwhelming numbers in our favor, fighting on our own soil, we failed and continued to fail. Why? Because the individual American is inferior to the individual Britisher? Not a bit of it. No American is willing to admit that. It is not true. But the Briton was a trained soldier who knew his trade. Our volunteers and militia got into each other's way. They had no conception of team work, and refused to learn. They were possessed of a mob spirit, time after time breaking into defiant insubordination and mutiny, even killing their own officers who attempted to enforce a semblance of discipline. For example: After the war was over some eighty recruits mutinied at Lancaster, and marched to Philadelphia. Here they were joined by about 200 comrades from the

barracks. Proceeding with music and fixed bayonets to the State House, where Congress and the Council of Pennsylvania were in session, they stationed sentinels at every door to prevent egress, and then served upon both bodies a written demand for the redress of their grievances, threatening military violence in case their wrongs were not righted within the brief space of twenty minutes. For several hours Congress and the Pennsylvania Council found themselves at the mercy of an armed and undisciplined soldiery. In this extremity, fearing that the State of Pennsylvania could not furnish adequate protection, Congress called for regular troops, abandoned the Capital and adjourned to meet at Princeton. Thus a few rioting recruits forced the flight of Congress. These were mere recruits, soldiers of a day who had not borne the heat and burden of the war. As against their behavior contrast the veteran Continentals. All honor to them, sturdy and steadfast, who patiently endured hunger, danger and cold; who suffered and bled without a murmur;

who in perfect good order retired to their homes without a settlement of their accounts or a farthing of money in their pockets. What an absolutely convincing parallel! On the one hand the turbulent and rebellious spirit of the mob, utterly barren of results upon the battlefield, but ready to follow the dictates of passion and the mouthings of a demagogue. On the other hand, the self-restraint, the effective and competent conduct of the Continental regulars. Bear in mind, my son, keep bearing it in mind, never forget, that they were precisely the same individual men to begin with; they came from the same homes, the same families and the same blood. The only difference between them lay in their training. Let me say it again, we Americans pride ourselves upon our individualism. We love to do just as we darn please, and hate anybody to give us orders. This brand of inefficiency is part of the price we pay for democracy.

Someway or other, by the help of Providence and the French, in some kind of fash-

ion, by main strength and awkwardness, we managed to stumble through the Revolution to a successful if not a triumphant conclusion. It was the French, however, who finally achieved our independence, and we can never repay them.

We could not have won without the French. After eight years of fighting for freedom, eight years of Washington's begging and pleading, we now had about one-third the number of men with which we had begun the war. It means something more: Altogether we had employed near 400,000. Eliminating possible killed and wounded, it means that many thousands of the volunteers who began fighting simply got tired and quit—with their bounties, perhaps more than 300,000 of them. Think of that, 300,000 soldiers of the young republic who had once been under arms, had now quietly retired to their homes because they were willing to fight no longer.

## X

## THE LITTLE WE LEARNED AND THE MUCH WE DIDN'T

My son, we ought to have learned something from all this tragedy of errors. We didn't. Folks just said, "We licked the entire British Empire," and let it go at that. The real facts never leaked into their noggins, that the Revolution had been prolonged to eight disastrous years, when by the intelligent and compact use of our resources, it might have been

ended by a single campaign. Of course a few men—mighty scarce and nobody listened—a few men sat down and figured out the reasons. Of course the Continental Congress was not to blame for the errors and left-handed inefficiencies of our military establishment. As I told you before, the Continental Congress had no power to raise a dollar or to enlist a man. It was nothing but a sterilized debating society, with power to say "Whereas" and "Resolved" and "Will you please" to the sovereign states. But the Federal Constitution, adopted in March, 1789, gave to the Congress of the young republic a giant's authority to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy, to levy taxes; so your Uncle Samuel is now clothed with every war power that the most despotic emperor could ask. Whatever now goes wrong with our scheme of national defense is directly chargeable to the United States Congress—and to your Uncle Samuel. But, my son, remember this and never forget, that neither Congress nor Uncle Sam can turn a

wheel unless we are backed up by public sentiment. It's the public sentiment of the country which makes Congress act. That's why I am so anxious to have all the country folks and all the city folks know exactly where we stand. There's no forty-seven different ways about what we've got to do. Do you suppose I'm talking to you just to hear my tongue rattle? No, siree. I'm busier than a bumblebee in a bucket of tar, but can't accomplish a thing unless the people get busy, too. Our folks have got plenty of sense if we can just make them dive down in their think-tanks and use it.

It's as plain as the nose on your face what we should have learned from the Revolution:

First: That nearly all the dangers that threatened the cause of independence may be traced to the total inexperience of our statesmen in regard to military affairs, which led to vital mistakes in army legislation.

Second: That, for waging war, a Confederation is the weakest of all governments.

Third: That neither voluntary enlistments

based on patriotism, nor a bounty, can be relied upon to supply men for a prolonged war.

Fourth: That the draft, selective or not selective, with voluntary enlistments and bounties, is the only sure reliance of the government in time of war.

Fifth: That short enlistments are destructive of discipline, tend to disgust men with the service, and force the government to resort to either a bounty or the draft.

Sixth: That when a nation attempts to combat disciplined troops with raw levies, it must maintain an army of at least twice the size of the enemy, and even then have no guarantee of success.

These facts are the A. B. C. of military horse sense—and likewise the X. Y. Z.

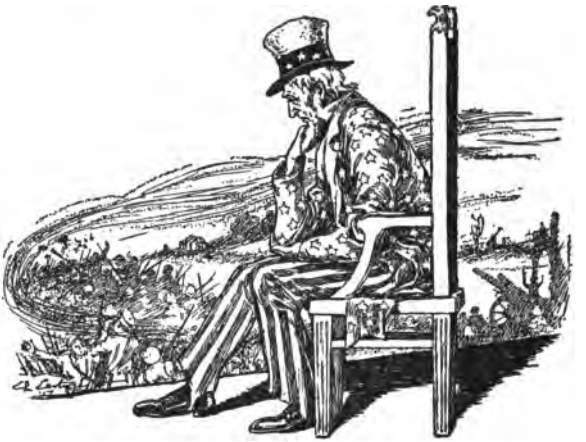
The Continental government acted without foresight in creating a system of volunteer militia, and the new Federal government displayed no hindsight by continuing it. Looking backward, and with complete power to remedy evils, it disbanded our regular army —except 80 men—and raised 700 men to serve

for one year. Revolutionary failures had taught nothing to the Congress which refused to be weaned away from its militia delusion.

By this time, my son, you must have grown tired of hearing about our militia fading away into thin mists when confronted by the rock-like ranks of regular troops. But doesn't it give you a pain to know that they did precisely the same thing when Lo, the poor Indian, let loose a war whoop? Our first military expedition after the Revolution was led by General Joseph Harmar against the Miami Indians—320 regulars and 1,133 militia. Sixty regulars and 330 militia attacked the Indian village, losing 183 killed and 31 wounded. The humiliating details were developed at the coroner's inquest—otherwise called Congressional investigation. Congress had a way of probing calamities after their occurrence, instead of preventing them in advance. Naturally they probed General Harmar's conduct, and judicially determined that "amongst the militia were a great many

hardly able to bear arms, such as old, infirm men, and young boys; they were not such as might be expected from a frontier; viz., strong, active woodsmen well accustomed to arms, eager and alert to avenge injuries done." Also, many of the militia were substitutes.

Congress utterly failed to detect the milk in the cocoanut, that even if the men had been "active woodsmen well accustomed to arms," without discipline they might be worthless as soldiers. A few months later 4,000 of such woodsmen actually ran away from a prairie fire.



## XI

## LO, THE IMPOLITE INDIAN

WHILE investigating the preventable tragedy of Harmar, everybody did a lot of talking—according to Congressional precedent. The evidence showed that on attacking the village the "militia behaved badly, disobeyed orders, and left the regular troops to be sacrificed." The Investigating Committee after weighing all testimony finally and solemnly concluded "that the conduct of the said Brig-

adier General Joseph A. Harmar merits our approbation." I wonder what the 183 dead men thought about it.

It would seem that foresights and hindsights, working together would sidetrack any future chance for such a catastrophe. Not a bit. One year later the same thing happened, only worse. General St. Clair, with 1,400 regulars and militia, was attacked by a nearly equal force of Indians, and routed. Think of that, by a *nearly equal* force. They were not overpowered, not outnumbered. Man to man the Indians beat the militia. St. Clair's army was destroyed, with a loss of 632 killed and 264 wounded, which exceeds the total killed at the battles of Long Island and Camden, the two bloodiest affairs of the Revolutionary War. This wasn't a fight, it was a massacre.

The House of Representatives immediately appointed another committee for another investigation. Foreseeing the future after it had occurred, this Committee reported that "the militia appeared to have been composed

principally of substitutes, totally ungovernable, regardless of military duty and subordination."

That was no news. Our militia had rarely been anything else. They were individual Americans. But Congress added an apology which explained everything: "The attack was unexpected, the troops having just been dismissed from morning parade. The militia were in advance and fled through the main army without firing a gun. This circumstance threw the troops into some disorder, from which it appears that they never recovered." Under such plainly mitigating circumstances the militiamen pleaded that the Indians had attacked unexpectedly, as Indians had no legal right to do. Indians are not submarines. Nobody was looking for Indians. Nobody was thinking of Indians. Nobody was meddling with Indians. A perfectly nice Indian should never jump on a mob of substitutes just after they had been dismissed from morning parade. And the militia, strictly according to Hoyle, turned

tail without firing, and ran backward through the regulars. The Congressional Report concludes with: "In justice to the Commander-in-Chief we say that the failure of the late expedition can in no respect be imputed to his conduct, either at any time before, or during the action." It became quite a conventional phrase to speak of any militia expedition as "the *late* expedition."

Now it was squarely up to Congress to do something, and Congress did.

My son, did you ever observe a dominecker hen setting on a china doorknob? Ever try to argue with her? It's no use. She will get off the nest, scratch gravel backwards, turn over the doorknob, investigate—investigate, and go to setting some more. Isn't she the perforated pattern of undiscouraged optimism? Well, Congress was just that stubborn about trying to hatch a brood of winners from this volunteer militia egg. Having officially settled the fact that the militia was an insubordinate, undisciplined and ineffective force, they immediately set to work—to break

it up? Oh dear, no. They built it up. They made it bigger and clumsier and worse. As the militia method was so bad to begin with, they went the limit, and converted everybody into militiamen. By Act of May 8, 1792, every free, able-bodied white male citizen between the ages of 18 and 45, was required to be enrolled in the militia of the United States, and served with notice of his enrollment. After that, every citizen should, within six months, provide himself with a good musket, or firelock, a sufficient bayonet and belt, two soft flints, and a knapsack, a pouch with a box therein to contain not less than 24 cartridges suited to the bore of his musket, etc., etc. Ah ha! Congress is learning; they specify by law that the cartridge should fit the gun. It now becomes the citizen's duty to appear for exercise or duty when called upon. However cumbersome this legal contraption, it was the first step ever taken by the United States Government towards universal military service.

One glaring defect of the law—if your Un-

cle Samuel may be respectfully permitted to select any particular defect—was that it left the militia at the command of the state governments. This statute remained dead on the statute books, there being no penalties provided for its violation.

Instead of creating one efficient national army, we became possessed of thirteen independent and disconnected state mobs. But it was a beautifully free mob of freeborn citizens. They could either get together and act as mob if they chose, or they could remain at home. There was no method of forcing them.

On this occasion I rise to remark: We must not forget that certain provision in the first section of the act which laid down the truly democratic doctrine that every able-bodied male citizen owes military service to his country.

It further provided for a system of enrollment and territorial recruiting. All the rest of the law was bad, hopelessly bad.

As a balm laid upon the soreness of Harmar's and St. Clair's defeats, in June, 1795,

General Wayne attacked and dispersed the Miami Indians. But in his force there was a very large preponderance of disciplined regulars, and it was their attack with the bayonet which scattered the savages.

## XII

## GEORGE'S PET

My son, I was speaking to you awhile ago about George Washington. Well, George had a pet scheme in the back part of his head, the foundation of a Military Academy. Only three days before his death he wrote to Alexander Hamilton: "The establishment of an institution of this kind has ever been considered by me as an object of primary importance for this country. When I was in the

chair of Government I omitted no proper opportunity of recommending it." Mr. McHenry, Secretary of War in 1805, submitted his views to Congress and said: "It cannot be forgotten that in our Revolutionary War it was not until after several years' practice with arms, that our soldiers became at all qualified to meet on the field of battle those to whom they were opposed. Occasional brilliant and justly celebrated acts of some of our militia detract nothing from this dearly bought truth."

By Act of 1805 Congress authorized the President to establish a Corps of Engineers, with a cadre of not over 20 officers and cadets, "which shall be stationed at West Point in the State of New York, and shall constitute a Military Academy."

Mighty small potatoes to begin with, but it grew.

During this period between the Revolution and the War of 1812 we had the Shay Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, complications with England and also with the Republic of

France. Congress appropriated money to fortify the coast and authorized the President to raise a provincial army of 10,000 men, in case of a declaration of war against the United States. They meant to wait, however, until war was actually declared against us. This army was never called into service. Later on further preparations were made for conflict with Great Britain, but Congress, with full power to maintain a real army, still clung to its militia delusion, and even reënacted the odious and ineffective bounty provisions.

Bounty attractions drew precisely the same results—or rather lack of results. The army, which in 1810 numbered 2,765, had only increased to 6,686 in July, 1812. On paper we were supposed to muster 35,603 men. It passes human belief that our muddle-headed mistakes should be repeated and made more glaring by a return to short-term enlistments so appalling in the Revolution. But that is exactly what Congress did, by reducing the term of enlistment from five years to 18

months. As a further and ghastlier joke the President was empowered to require the governors of the States to hold in readiness to march at a moment's notice a detachment of militia not exceeding 80,000 officers and men. The trouble is that such militia marched backwards much more fluently than they ever advanced forward. I'm going to tell you more about this presently, the harrowing story of how the capital of this nation fell.

When our relations with England and France were such that we only maintained an army of 2,000 to 3,000 men, it did not need officers. And for a dead certainty we did not have them. But when war stared us again in the face it was more than criminal neglect to find that after 25 years of independence we were entering another great struggle with officers scarcely more efficient than those whom Washington had deplored in the first years of the Revolution. Up to 1812 only 71 cadets had graduated from the Military Academy.

Then, although we had been expecting it for

fourteen years, the War of 1812 sneaked up behind us. Remember the ostrich?

Whether we saw it coming or not, we had another big war on our hands. In spite of the fact that six months previously Congress had increased, on paper, the regular establishment to 35,000 men, only 6,744 were actually present and ready for service.

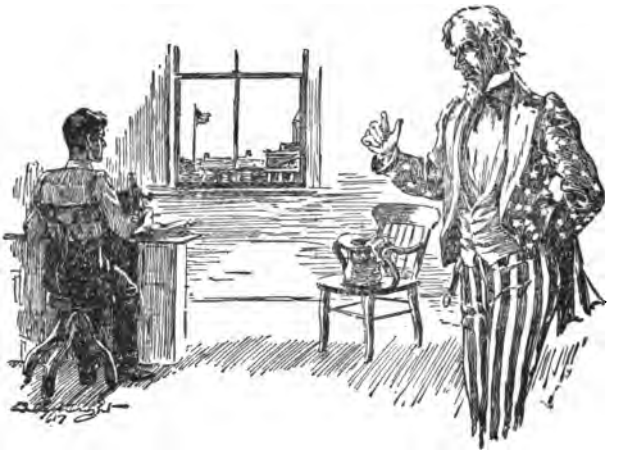
Manifestly if we were going to strike England it must be through Canada. Our Secretary of War gained the information that Great Britain's regular forces in Canada did not exceed 6,000 men. Reliable English writers of the time say that their force numbered 4,450, largely composed "of old men and invalids fit only for barracks duty." My son, I don't know exactly what they were fit for, but they were fit. I can prove that by various American expeditions that were dispatched against them.

You cannot understand the situation unless you recall that we were working under the military laws of May, 1792. Congress had the theoretical right to call together an army, but

it was like calling spirits from the vasty deep —anybody can call the spirits but they won't come.

The Governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut positively refused to furnish their quotas of the 100,000 militia authorized by the Act of April 10, 1812. They claimed that state militia could only be employed in the service of the United States for three purposes—executing the laws of the Union, suppressing insurrection, and repelling invasion. These governors wanted to know precisely where their men were to be used, and how. President Madison could not order the state militia into national service without forcing individual men to become deserters from their states, because the law made no exception if a man left the state service to enter the service of the nation. These governors were able to paralyze for the time being the military power of their respective states, and defeat the plans of the general government. Every wheel had to stop while the Supreme Judicial Court solemnly liti-

gated the wrangle. This learned debate complicated the enlistment proposition, and the men themselves took it up, discussing the question at their camp fire courts. Presently we'll see what effect this had at Queenstown. It hurts mightily to rake all these skeletons out of my family closet, but I couldn't stand to look at them if we had not through later years absolutely demonstrated the courage and capacity of American volunteers—once they had been trained and are under rigid discipline. I merely want to impress upon you the fact that our boys need work and steady training before they're worth a hang as soldiers.



## XIII

## "ON TO CANADA!"

Every freeborn American has an inalienable and constitutional right to shoot off his mouth whenever he gets ready, loaded with cannister, shrapnel or blanks—generally blanks. Immediately the War of 1812 broke out, satchel-mouthed patriots raised the cry of "On to Canada!"

"On to Canada!" "On to Canada!" they shouted at every crossroads and every street

corner. Passionate orators, who meant to stay at home, demanded instant invasion. Our statesmen on the hill, profoundly blind as to what was needed against the disciplined foe, decided offhand that a small body of volunteers and militia would suffice. Kittens get their eyes open at the end of nine days. Statesmen are not kittens.

General Isaac Hull must have known better. He was a tried hero of the Revolution, an experienced veteran, and close personal friend of George Washington. Yet in July, General Hull, with a picked force of 300 regulars and 1,500 militia started "On to Canada!" He crossed over from Detroit to the Canadian side. The populace behind him clamored "On to Canada!" so General Hull went on. But he returned instantly, without inflicting the slightest damage or accomplishing a solitary result. Having regained his own side of the river, he took shelter in the American fort at Detroit. The British force could not comprehend his subtle strategy. It roused their curiosity. They wanted to find

out why. So the British General Brock, being an inquisitive person, followed General Hull, invaded our territory and bottled up Hull in his fort at Detroit. Now remember, my son, General Hull lay snug, in a well fortified position, with some 1,800 men. The British commander having landed on American soil, with 1,320 men, refused to believe his own eyes when the Americans hoisted a white flag over their fort, and surrendered a *superior force inside* to an *inferior force outside*—and without even popping a cap. By this fiasco we Americans lost control of the entire northwest country, together with all the advantage of the initiative, which passed into British hands. Furthermore, their unexpected and easy success brought to the British standard nearly every Indian in all that region.

My son, what are you beginning to think about this proposition of a single-handed American farmer licking ten of any other nation on the globe?

Remember this British officer's name, Gen-

eral Brock. You'll hear of him again. At that time he had only 1,320 regulars. Yet he very easily got Detroit, and the whole northwestern country, for a Christmas gift. Presently we shall count the cost, in men and money, to dislodge the redcoats.

What a howl went up from "On to Canada!" promoters. Every crossroads oracle expressed his opinion, his personal opinion. They accused General Hull of treason, they charged him with cowardice, they called him bad names, and convened a court martial to prove it. In spite of the Revolutionary hero's vigorous defense, the court martial actually convicted him of cowardice, although acquitting him of the treason.

How did General Hull explain it? By saying that he began his march with the Fourth United States Regiment, consisting of 300 effective men, and was joined by 1,200 militia at Urbana. "After the disposition was made for the march, I was informed that part of the militia refused to obey the order. I directed their own officers to give them positive orders

to march, and informed them if they did not obey, the Fourth United States Regiment would be sent to compel them. They still refused, and a part of the Fourth Regiment was marched to their station. Then they obeyed."

Fair-minded men were convinced that Hull's surrender was caused by the fact that the larger portion of his recruits were unfit, unreliable and insubordinate. A mutinous spirit prevailed among the men, the authority of their officers was not sufficient to command obedience, and nothing but the bayonets of the Fourth Regular Regiment could have any effect.

It was considered that General Hull's long and disheartening experience with raw militia preyed upon his mind and might possibly have caused him to surrender when there was no real necessity. If so, what a travesty, that the gray-haired and gallant officer should be placed in such position.

Were it not so humiliating, the details of this blunder would be amusing. One hundred and eighty of Hull's recruits, who had so

gayly started "On to Canada!" balked at their own side of the river, because it was unconstitutional for militia to serve outside the United States, which recalls the sensible old song,

"Mother, may I go in to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter.
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But don't go near the water."

That's an American joke and everybody can understand it. But what the British did to the recruits who were captured was no joke to Americans. General Brock added the stinging insult to Hull's surrender by sending all United States regulars as prisoners to Montreal. The volunteers and militia he simply turned loose. Why shouldn't he turn loose such harmless persons? Volunteers and militia were utterly useless to their own government, constituted no peril to the British, and were not worth feeding in captivity. This contempt subsequently reacted upon the British at New Orleans.

## XIV

## THE PRAIRIE FIRE PANIC

HULL'S inglorious finish riled the Americans. They got their dander up, especially some high-tempered mountaineers in Tennessee and Kentucky, where General Hopkins raised 4,000 mounted militia. They treated America to the spectacle of a genuine rush—the real thing—a rush which measured up to every optimistic prediction of those who placed their faith in militia—4,000 fiery cava-

liers, "smart and active woodsmen," eager for revenge, sniffing the battle from afar—4,000 mounted frontiersmen rode, furiously, upon what developed into the wittiest campaign of any war—if brevity be the soul of wit. Their whirlwind campaign lasted five days. Once on the march the ardor of the troops began to cool, and the leaven of mutiny wrought disintegration. On the fourth day a prairie fire was mistaken for some cunning ruse of the enemy. Panic-stricken and totally ignoring the authority of their officers, the disorderly rabble abandoned their journey. Incredible as it may sound, it is yet the sober truth, that 4,000 hardy pioneers scurried back again to their mountains, hysterically frightened by an anonymous and serenely innocent prairie fire. Their officers ordered and pleaded and raved and swore; nothing could stop such an unreasoning and undisciplined rabble.

Every fellow for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, they scattered to their homes, each with a gory and imaginative tale to tell.

This is just another illustration of individual initiative—working backwards.

It is perfectly possible to take a thousand individuals, each of whom is individually fearless, form them hastily into a regiment, and collectively they will not stand fire. A thousand individual heroes may easily make *one collective regimental coward.* Such is the incomprehensible psychology of the mob.

But the point to be emphasized is this: Nobody seemed to learn anything from these staggering stampedes. Even General William Henry Harrison, who had sense enough to become President of the United States some years later, tried his hand at the same game. He selected another army for the express, sworn and heralded purpose of wiping out the stain of Hull's surrender. Again it was militia—frontiersmen—from Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania. Volunteers surged forward with the greatest enthusiasm, and offered themselves in such numbers that General Harrison could only take a chosen few, and leave the disappointed

many. These were not old men and weaklings and substitutes; they were Indian-fighting sons of the border—stout bodies and brave souls, but undisciplined.

The militia of Kentucky and Tennessee assembled at Louisville and Newport; those from Virginia mobilized at Urbana; and the Pennsylvania crowd gathered at Erie. They were to march in three columns with a supposed total of not less than ten thousand men. Think of it! Ten thousand Daniel Boones, Simon Kentons and Buffalo Bills! What glory a school boy would expect from such an expedition, which trailed through the forest, registering oaths against the savage redskins, and swearing to make the British sweat for their capture of Detroit.

It ended as was foreordained, in the same old, sad old way. No sooner had the several columns began to move than they began to strike the truly American stumbling blocks of mutiny and disobedience. Raw militia stand hard work with no better grace than they will stand a steady hammering. The left

column from Kentucky, when only a few days out, had to be argued and pleaded with, remaining only in response to the personal entreaties of General Harrison. The middle column, from Urbana, after a slight skirmish with Indians, flatly refused to obey orders for a further pursuit, and returned to their camp. This ended the autumn campaign, and represented the total accomplishments of ten thousand men, frontiersmen at that, engaged in the very kind of warfare for which they were supposed to be peculiarly adapted. Once again they demonstrated the undependableness of men who were not trained to control and obedience, no matter what may be their patriotism and courage. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was done until January 22, 1813, when a forward movement under General Winchester was defeated and captured at Frenchtown with a loss of 397 killed, 27 wounded and 526 prisoners. The British force was the same that had, under General Brock, captured Detroit, and were now commanded by Proctor who terrorized the north-

west. The American loss at Frenchtown was a natural sequence of Hull's surrender, and a further installment of the price that we were continually paying for the insubordination of our militia.

But, my son, let me impress upon you, let me tell you over and over again, the shame of it is that these same militiamen who run away, mutiny, and surrender, represent A No. 1 military material which we lose for lack of training, discipline and organization.

For a moment now turn back to the beginning of the war. You will remember that President Madison had an argument with various governors and lawyers as to whether the state militia could be employed outside of the United States. That powwow raged in the capitol and continued in the camp, to this distressing outcome: On October 12, 1812, General Van Rensselaer, commanding 900 regulars and 2,270 militia, held Fort Niagara; 225 American regulars crossed the river into Canada and by a brilliant assault captured the British heights at Queenstown. General

Brock, the British commander who had taken Detroit, at once saw the importance of dislodging these troops, and was killed while leading an unsuccessful assault. In the meantime most of the militia detachment which was to have taken part of the original movement, as well as the remainder of the regulars, had crossed the Niagara to help defend the heights. But the rest of the militia on our side of the river, although ordered and implored by their commander, absolutely refused to pass beyond the borders of the United States. Stubborn as mules, they balked within plain sight and watched their comrades being slaughtered, while they debated a high point of law—whereas, viz, to wit: whether or not under the Constitution of the United States duly adopted in May, 1787, they as militiamen of the sovereign States, temporarily in the service of the National Government, could be called out for any service other than to resist invasion. Manifestly this was not resisting an invasion, they were safely on their own side of the river, within

the United States while their friends and kinsmen beyond the river were dying in foreign territory. The militia won their argument, while every solitary American who had already crossed the river was either killed or forced to surrender—250 killed and wounded, and 700 prisoners. The British lost 16 killed and 69 wounded. The total British force was estimated at 600 regulars with 500 militia and Indians. The Americans had 900 regulars and 2,270 militia.

A little later Gen. Proctor, who apparently succeeded Gen. Brock in command of the British, had penned up Gen. Harrison in Fort Meigs on the east bank of the Miami River. Proctor's 983 regulars and militia with twelve hundred Indians, occupied both banks of the river. Twelve hundred Kentucky militia under Gen. Clay were moving down the Miami to Harrison's support. Harrison sent orders for Clay to land eight hundred men on the west bank, spike the enemy's cannon, and return to their boats—which eight hundred Americans easily accomplished. But instead

of returning to their boats, they stormed the British camp—result: 45 killed, 605 prisoners, 150 escaped. The other detachment, thanks to a vigorous sortie by the regulars, succeeded in entering the fort. One-half the command had been lost by disobedience and individual initiative.

One bright spot showed in the whole campaign. Fort Stephenson was garrisoned by 160 American regulars, under command of Major Croghan, a lad of less than twenty-one. Through his successes Proctor had grown audacious. He assaulted the fort with 391 British regulars, losing 96. The garrison casualties were 1 killed and 7 slightly wounded. Why the difference? Easy to answer. Major Croghan's Americans were regulars, and knew how to obey.

There is no sense in piling up instances. The War of 1812 bristled with calamities caused by our unmanageable, disorganized and inefficient militia. Throughout that war the British regulars held Canada with probably 5,000 men. Against them we sent expe-

dition after expedition, losing 5,614 in killed and wounded—614 more, possibly a thousand more—than the entire British force, and we never budged them. They continued to hold Canada. Undisciplined courage hurled itself in vain against their organized and immovable ranks.

## XV

## THE TIN HORN DEFENSE

Looking back at our catalogue of adversities, I get mighty darn hot in the collar to hear some well-meaning and loudly-vocal person go careering around the country and orate as per this formula: "Should foreign hirelings assail the integrity of this Republic, one blast upon the bugle trump of Freedom and a million patriots will spring to arms over night!" Spring to arms. What

arms? Where? Not this Spring. But the worst of it is that thousands of sensible folks believe that rot. It's a shame to puncture such a pretty noise, but in 1814 this bugle trump experiment—this tin horn scheme of defense—was actually tested. A British fleet carrying 3,000 troops threatened Washington City. On July 4 President Madison sounded the bugle trump, day of all days when Freedom's blast should have been heard and answered by Freedom's warriors. Various governors were ordered "to hold in readiness for immediate service a corps of 93,500." We had these warriors on paper, upwards of ninety thousand, and their numbers seemed exuberantly ample to beat off 3,000 regulars. Besides, we had the bugle trump. Yet, heedless of that talismanic blast, the redcoats landed. On August 24th every solitary mother's son of our 93,500 warriors sprang to arms—every one of them, except 88,099. For defense of the Capital, 5,041 men actually assembled, without organization, discipline or skilled leadership. To render

the spectacle more splendidly humiliating, President Madison and his Cabinet rode out to witness the battle of Bladensburg.

The British only employed 1,500 men, but they were trained men; 1,500 real soldiers marched through our paper forces of 93,500, just as if they had been paper—wet tissue paper. After a loss of eight men killed and eleven wounded, Freedom's warriors scattered, abandoning their Capital to the British torch, and yet, according to most conservative estimates, our 5,401 patriots should have easily licked a hireling army of 54,000 men.

Remember, this British fleet had been hovering along the Chesapeake for more than a year. Congress had ample time to get ready, and Congress possessed unlimited power to raise armies. Yet the administration paid no attention to the danger until June. Then they began to inquire of each other through the routine red tape channels, "What force have we?" Answer, returning by devious paths, "2,208 men," mostly recruits, dis-

persed at various points along the Chesapeake, from Baltimore to Norfolk.

My son, we've tried the bugle-trump and it gives me a shiver to think of relying wholly upon such a tin horn scheme of defense. It's just a little worse than the ten-to-one shot.

After the capture and burning of Washington had been so smoothly accomplished, our people got wrathy, and howled. The Secretary of War was chased out of the Capital, and not permitted to return, even for the pious purpose of handing in his most urgently demanded resignation. Washington City had fallen, and the popular indignation fell upon the Secretary. It was possibly no more his fault than the surrender of Detroit had been the fault of General Hull. He had relied upon the state governors to send 93,500 militia to protect the National Capital. But the 93,500 didn't come. As a result of his depending upon a rush of patriots who failed to rush, the Secretary was compelled to fly, "hissed and hunted" to his home in Virginia.

Now, let's skip a lot of bungles, and go

south, to something that looks better, the battle of New Orleans.

At Bunker Hill, if you remember, our farmers fired from behind rail breastworks and justified Israel Putnam's prediction that "these Americans will fight forever if you protect their legs." At New Orleans our position was far stronger, a line of defense well chosen and fortified by impervious cotton bales. Yet British officers and regulars had acquired such contempt for our militia that General Pakenham ordered the impossible. Long afterwards a British officer told me that if Pakenham hadn't been killed he would have been courtmartialed for his folly.

The British were beaten with terrific loss. Yet one little fly—the same busy and buzzing little fly—got into the ointment of our jubilation. On the west bank of the river the American breastworks—with the exception of a single battery manned by sailors—were defended exclusively by militia. At the very moment of a victory unparalleled in our history, Old Hickory had the mortification of

seeing his division on the west bank "abandon their position and run in headlong flight towards the city." Old Hickory naturally cussed 'em out for their disobedience, insubordination and cowardice.

The Battle of New Orleans occurred two weeks after a treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, and before the news reached this country. Now suppose this unnecessary battle had never been fought, my son, can you point to a single big victory that we gained upon the land? Yet we outnumbered the British more than 32 to 1.

Our navy, on the contrary, waged a bold and successful warfare. But they were seafaring men, trained, skillful and obedient. All of which further emphasizes the point that I have been trying to make clear—the transformation which can be accomplished by discipline.

Let me throw at you one more big detail, then I'm done with the War of 1812. In that war, by the same wasteful militia system, we employed first and last 527,654 men—more

than half a million, which included 33,481 *inexperienced officers.* During 1814 alone we paid for and maintained more than 235,000 men under arms. In contrast with our reckless extravagance let me impress upon you the fact that, according to the best figures obtainable, the largest force of British ever opposed to us was 16,500. And yet with all this preponderance of numbers—more than thirty-two Americans to one British regular—we achieved only a single decisive victory before the treaty of peace. Does that sound like Americans licking ten to one?

The solitary victory which we gained was the battle of the Thames, where the British regulars, dispersed and captured, numbered 834; in addition to this, General Proctor—the same Proctor who had been raising so much sand in the northwest—had a force of Indians estimated at twelve hundred. Thirty-three of their warriors were left dead on the field, including the famous Tecumseh. General Harrison estimated his American forces at a little over three thousand.

During this War of 1812 no fewer than 5,000 British soldiers for a period of two years, brought war and devastation into our territory, and successfully withstood the misapplied power of seven million people.

## XVI

## UNCLE SAM COUNTS THE COST

Folks say that we Americans can squeeze a dollar until the eagle squawks. Maybe so, but we begin squeezing at the wrong end of the military eagle. For instance: What do you suppose it cost to disperse those 800 British regulars who from first to last made prisoners of Hull's army at Detroit, let loose the Northwestern Indians, routed and captured Winchester's command at Frenchtown,

besieged Fort Meigs, were repulsed at Fort Stephenson, twice invaded Ohio, and played the devil generally? What did it cost us to get rid of them? Tabulated totals would make the tight-fisted Yankee squawk. Here's a rough estimate of the human effort: Besides our hastily organized and half filled regiments of regulars sent to the West, about 50,000 militia were called out in the years of 1812 and 1813 from Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Virginia—for service *against those* 800 British regulars. It finally required General Harrison with more than three thousand men to disperse and capture them at the Battle of the Thames. All of which means, that during the time they were ravaging our country we employed a force of more than sixty men against one—and employed it ineffectually for upwards of two years. This does not include the unnecessary loss of life, nor property destroyed by the Brock and Proctor command. Did you ever read that in a popular school history? Ever hear any Fourth of July orator tell that

in a frenzied speech? No sir, no politician would dare run for constable on that platform.

Now, my son, can you partially understand why I want to quit that expensive form of suicide, and get down to brass tacks? Yet our folks keep on insisting, "Didn't we beat the whole British Empire in 1812?"

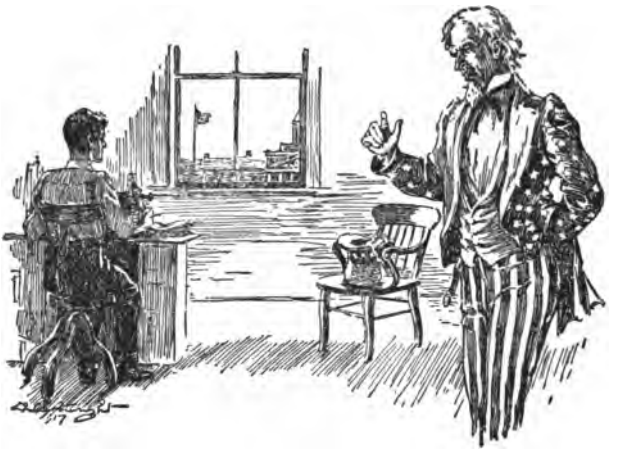
France helped us in the Revolution and helped us again in 1812, by making it necessary for Great Britain to withdraw her redcoats in order to combat the Emperor Napoleon. The very troops which Andrew Jackson defeated, on January 8th at New Orleans, were immediately transferred to the fields of France and contributed to Napoleon's downfall at Waterloo.

When I sit down and think it all over, it hits me square between the eyes that we Americans must be gluttons for punishment. Those nauseous doses that we were forced to take during the War of 1812 ought to have had some effect. But Congressmen can swal-

low a heap of bad medicine, if they continue to get elected right straight along.

After the Revolution you will remember that all knowledge of the military art was practically extinguished by reducing our army to eighty persons, not enough for supe soldiers in a comic opera.

After the War of 1812 Congress provided for a permanent peace establishment of 10,000 men, somewhat more than 1,000 to each million of population and fairly proportioned to the needs of the country. Nearly all of its higher grades were filled by officers who had acquired competent training in the war, while by the increase of the Corps of Cadets in 1812, the lower grades were in future to be filled by young men who had been carefully "trained and taught all the duties of a private, non-commissioned officer and officer." Since this time, whenever our regular army has met an enemy, the conduct of officers and men has merited and received the applause of their countrymen. More than this it has preserved to us the military art.



## XVII

## MORE FIGHTS FOR PEACEFUL FOLK

My son, you skirmish around the country right smart and you'll hear folks talk about us being a peaceful people. As a matter of fact, we have had a tolerable thick sprinkling of wars. The Seminole War broke out in 1817; the Black Hawk War in 1832, and the Florida War in 1835.

Suppose we take a look at that Florida War. In 1835, although our population ex-

ceeded fifteen millions, less than 4,000 soldiers were supposed to guard the sea coast, the Canadian frontier, and a vast territory which swarmed with hostile Indians. We must have opened that Florida War with a left-handed can opener, so awkwardly and negligently that it spun out to interminable length, with an utterly unnecessary loss of life and property. Major Dade and his command of 110 men were massacred by the Seminoles; only three escaped. That happened on the 28th day of December, 1835. The next day General Clinch, with about 200 regular troops, proceeded to attack the Seminoles on the Withlacoochee River. Governor Call of Florida marched out to help him, with between 400 and 500 volunteers. On December 31st General Clinch crossed the Withlacoochee River and was attacked by a large body of Indians, whom he defeated. Out of the 200 regulars 67 were killed or wounded, including four officers—33⅓ per cent. What about the volunteers? Of them 400 or 500 had joined General Clinch for the avowed pur-

pose of pulverizing the Indians, yet only 27 volunteers and 3 officers took part in the engagement. Why so many volunteers remained out of action is not explained. Had they displayed the same zeal and bravery as the regulars, the Seminole War would have ended right there. But it did not end for seven years.

Instead of employing regular soldiers who were hardened to such work, the Secretary of War ordered the Governors of South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama to call out their militia "to serve for at least three months after arriving at the place of rendezvous." Year after year, through war after war, we have repeated over and over again the same stupidities that have inevitably led to the same disasters. We had forgotten the lessons of the Revolution, the terrible defeats of Harmar and St. Clair, and the monumental inefficiency of our militia in the war of 1812.

The Seminole Indians were supposed to number not more than 1,200—or at the wildest guess 2,000—yet this war dragged on

from 1835 to 1842, during which years we employed 41,122 men. In the regular army alone our losses from killed, and soldiers who died of wounds, were 1,466. Add to this the losses of volunteers and militia, for whom there are no available statistics. No well-informed man doubts that the Seminoles killed more Americans than they had warriors. The British had massacred us just as badly in our assaults upon Canada, which we satisfactorily explained by saying that the British were regulars. Here were Indians doing the same thing. The Florida War, about which so little is said, became our bloodiest and costliest affair, proportionately; yet competent troops could have ended it with the first battle. Indian resistance would have been paralyzed at the Withlacoochee, if the volunteers and militia had been trained men and properly handled. The raw militia called out at the beginning of this war were only supposed to serve for three months. I am not going into details of those heart-breaking seven years, seven years of wading through

morasses—of brave men fighting with the fevers and dying like flies. A single regiment lost 217 men from disease. Think of the terrific death rate. Our little army, whose maximum strength was 4,191, suffered a death rate that fell only 411 men short of the total number killed in the War of 1812—*in which we employed more than half a million men.* All of which could have been avoided by effective action at the start.

During two years of this period, 1836-1838, we were also engaged in the Creek War, and the Cherokee War.

The total troops employed, volunteers, militia and regulars from 1835 to 1842—which included the Creek War and the Cherokee War, amounted to 60,691—all of these against a mere handful of Indians. What do you think now of the 10 to 1 proposition?

## XVIII

## A LONESOME GENERAL

DURING 1838 and 1839 we had another serious complication with Great Britain along the Niagara frontier which seemed to foreshadow a third great war. There were armed invasions of British territory by Americans; an expedition crossed from Canada to our side, killed several persons, set the steamer *Caroline* on fire, and drifted her over the falls. 200,000 Americans banded themselves to-

gether under the name of "Canadian Patriots" with the avowed object of invading and annexing Canada. At this critical juncture General Scott was dispatched to the frontier, with full authority to call on the governors of all the border States, including Virginia and Kentucky, for such force of militia as he might deem expedient. Here we were again, blindly trying the same militia experiment.

In addressing excited crowds along the border, General Scott was obliged to inform the people: "I stand before you without troops, and without arms, save the sword at my side." Which would make a wonderful historical painting, a dramatic and spectacular opera bouffe, but is no businesslike method of conducting a modern campaign.

We patched up our squabble with Great Britain to renew it next year in a dispute over the boundaries of the State of Maine. There is no guessing when the most peaceable chap is going to mix up in a scrap with neighbors. All this time the Florida War was likewise dragging along. We never brought

it to a close until 1842, and, after seven years of fruitless fighting, had to give the Indians their own way to get peace. Didn't know that, did you? That's torn out of the popular histories.

Here is what we should have learned from these Indian wars:

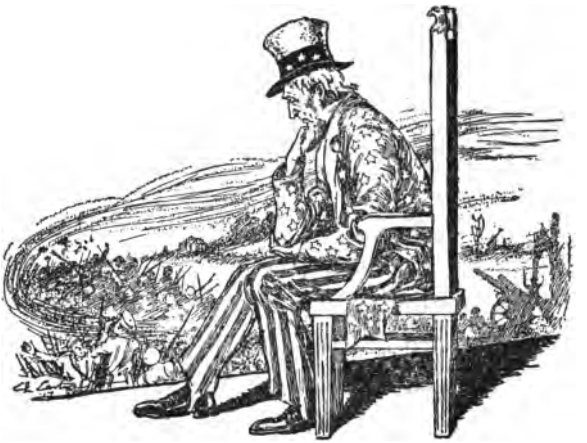
First. That the expense was tripled, if not quadrupled, by that feature of the law of 1821 which gave the Government, in times of emergency, no discretion to increase the number of enlisted men in the army.

Second. That, after successfully employing militia and volunteers for short periods of service, and exhausting their enthusiasm, Congress found it more humane and economical to continue operations with regular troops enlisted for the period of five years.

Third. That for want of a well-defined peace organization, a nation of seventeen millions of people contended for seven years with 1,200 warriors, and finally closed the struggle without accomplishing the forcible

emigration of the Indians—*which was the original and sole cause of the war.*

These were the lessons which Congress and our people failed to learn.



## XIX

## THE MEXICAN PARADOX

BEGINNING in 1845, the Mexican War was a series of unexampled victories, from Palo Alto to Buena Vista on the North, from Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo to the Mexican Capital on the South.

Successes so brilliant would apparently denote the perfection of military policy, yet paradoxical as it may seem, they were achieved under the same system of laws and

Executive Orders which in the preceding foreign war had led to a succession of calamities, terminating in the capture of Washington City. The explanation of this paradox is found in the different character of our adversaries, but more particularly the difference in the quality of the army with which we began the two wars.

The Mexican War broke out three years after the Florida War ended, when we had a large number of well-trained men. Comparing it with the War of 1812 we find that in the War of 1812 the combined force of regulars, and volunteers of one year or more of service, was but 12 per cent of the total troops employed, while 88 per cent were raw recruits. In the Mexican War these figures were exactly reversed—88 per cent of our troops were either regulars, or volunteers who had seen *at least twelve months' service.* In the one war an army of 5,401 raw troops fighting in defense of our National Capital, fled before 1,500 redcoats, with a loss of 19 killed and wounded. In the

other, a force of less than 5,000 *trained* volunteers, supported by a few regular troops, overthrew the Mexican army of four times their number.

In the one war 5,000 regulars held Canada, baffling all of our efforts at invasion; in the other our army numbering 6,000 combatants triumphantly entered the enemy's Capital.

There is still another reason, growing out of the foresight of George Washington in establishing the military academy at West Point. General Scott himself has forcibly stated this reason, "I give it as my fixed opinion that but for our graduated cadets the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share. Whereas, in less than two campaigns, we conquered a great country and a peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish."

That's fine! That's the way I want my soldiers to talk and fight. But we had our worri-

ments during that Mexican War, mostly growing out of the same old muddle of militia and short-term enlistments. And, also, out of the military innocence cherished by our friends the statesmen on Capitol Hill.

In order to avoid any possible variation in our method of courting calamity, General Taylor, who commanded on the Texas border, was instructed to resist invasion, and if expedient to carry the war into Mexico. For this purpose he was empowered to call upon the militia of the surrounding states, and particularly the Texans.

Here we go again, limping off on the same old crippled foot, trying to do again the very thing which caused the loss of an army at Queenstown, where our militia refused to serve outside the United States. Of course, it was a palpable violation of the Constitution to send militia on a foreign invasion. Our regular force at that time, on paper, was about 4,000 men. By actual figures this "army of occupation" on the frontiers of Texas, in May, 1846, numbered 73 companies,

with 209 officers and 2,839 men actually present. Each of these companies, *but for a defect in the law,* should have mustered 100 men; which would have raised the total force to about 8,000.

His numerical weakness, however, did not bluff General Taylor. What he had was good. Four-fifths of his officers were West Pointers, trained to their trade. Six months in a camp of instruction at Corpus Christi had brought his troops to the highest point of discipline and esprit de corps.

On the 25th of April Thornton's Dragoons, in a skirmish on the east bank of the river lost 16 killed and 11 wounded. The emergency had arisen, and Taylor promptly called upon the Governors of Louisiana and Texas for 5,000 volunteers. But the call came too late. Volunteers could not reach him.

On April 26th the enemy crossed the Rio Grande in large force, and next day Taylor accepted their challenge at Palo Alto. The fight began at two o'clock in the afternoon,

and by dark the Americans were masters of the field. The following day Taylor routed the Mexicans at Resaca de la Palma and drove them across the Rio Grande. Now, here's the point. Instead of having 8,000 men, General Taylor's force numbered 173 officers and 2,049 men, of whom 1,700 were engaged. His loss was 10 per cent—170 killed and wounded. The enemy's force was estimated at 6,000 with a loss of 1,000. Reënforcements reached the Americans three days too late for salvation, if General Taylor had been overwhelmed.

In response to Taylor's call the veteran General Gaines at New Orleans promptly set to work organizing and equipping an army on his own responsibility. So rapidly did he proceed, calling on the Governors of Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri, that he sent 8,000 troops to General Taylor before he could be relieved of command and stopped.

And thereby hangs another distressing tale; 5,389 men were sent from Louisiana to General Taylor after the emergency had

passed. Destitute of equipment and transportation, they were compelled to fret in idleness until discharged. Called out for three months they returned home without the satisfaction of having fired a shot. Their losses by death were 145—just 25 less than were killed and wounded in the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Casualties of carelessness nearly equaled those of battle. Which is a mighty good reason why men should hate to volunteer, and expose themselves to a futile death.

Now think of this: While some 20,000 volunteers were hastily dispatched to the theater of war, not a solitary wagon reached General Taylor until after his capture of Monterey. The fact of it is, there was neither gossip nor information on file at Washington as to whether or not wagons could be used in Mexico. We had no Bureau of Military Statistics. When Taylor began his march on Monterey with 6,000 men, for lack of transportation and subsistence he was compelled to leave behind him 6,000 other men.

Providence condones the blunders of these United States, and this wagon oversight switched round to our advantage. It enabled General Taylor to form the volunteers who were left behind into an army of the second line, to drill and prepare them for future campaigns. Those whom he carried with him, he put through a course of six hours' drilling per day. Never was the value of disciplined men more triumphantly demonstrated; 4,759 men, of whom but 517 were regulars, at the battle of Buena Vista, defeated the entire Mexican army of 18,133 men, with 20 pieces of artillery. General Taylor, in his official report, comments upon the "high state of discipline and instruction of several of the volunteer regiments."

## XX

## ADVANCE, HALT, AND GENTLEMEN CHANGE

Despite these dazzling American successes at the North the Mexicans refused to sue for peace, so General Scott was ordered to capture the City of Mexico itself—with fewer than 12,000 men. Vera Cruz surrendered to him on the 29th of March, 1847. On the 8th of April he began his march into the interior. On the 18th at Cerro Gordo, he attacked and overthrew the Mexican army, capturing 3,-

000 prisoners and 43 pieces of artillery. So complete was their annihilation that Mexico no longer had an army and the road to the Capital lay open. But the American general had to stop, solely and simply because of an error committed under the dome of our Capitol at Washington. Here he was, commanding a handful of men, in the heart of a hostile country, with troops that were enlisted, not "for the war," but with the option "to serve twelve months" or "to the end of the war."

There was absolutely no excuse for this; it could have been prevented if a solitary member of Congress, familiar with the military history of his country, had moved to strike out the loophole option. But there it was, left in the law by the ignorance and the haste of legislators. National enthusiasm would have supplied men for the war, as bountifully as for twelve months. The term of Scott's twelve months men was about to expire. They wanted to go home, and had the unquestioned legal right. So on the 4th

of May, almost immediately after his triumph at Cerro Gordo, he was compelled to part with seven out of his eleven regiments of volunteers, numbering in the aggregate 4,000 men.

Which left him confronting a precarious situation: Scott was now at Puebla, within two days' march of Mexico City, his army being reduced to 5,820 effective men. He must sit tight and if possible cling to what he had conquered, while the enemy, profiting by our numskullery and delay, reorganized an army of five times his number. Abandoning Jalapa, cut off from his base of supplies, Scott's marvelous victories were about to go for nothing, and his campaign seemed on the verge of collapse.

Army officers to-day insist that if General Scott's small force of regulars had then been captured, 100,000 recruits and inexperienced officers would not have been sufficient to retrieve the disaster.

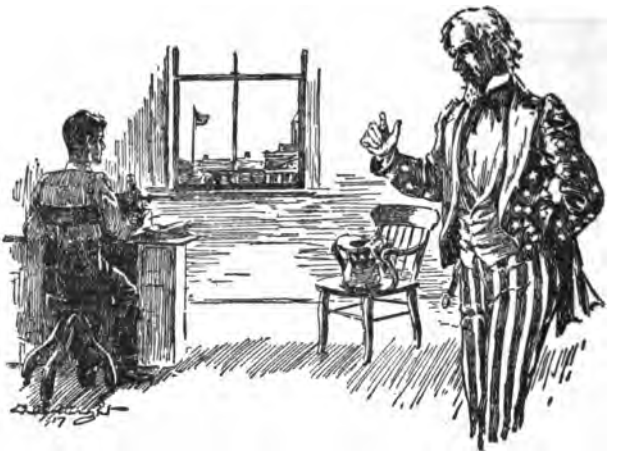
Scott's little army lay at Puebla for more than two months, while regiments were being

raised in the United States to take the places of those who had returned home. Three and one-half months after the battle of Cerro Gordo reënforcements raised his total to 10,276 men, of whom nearly one-fourth were sick. On August 6th other reënforcements brought their numbers up to nearly 14,000, of whom 3,000 were sick or in the hospitals. Compelled still further to weaken himself by guarding his line of communications, Scott resumed the offensive, against an army estimated by the Mexicans themselves at 36,000 men, with 100 pieces of cannon. But General Scott had exceeding confidence in the character of his troops and fearlessly led them to a succession of brilliant victories. Beginning on the 20th of August our largest force engaged was 8,479 men, of whom he lost, in the series of battles, 2,703. So that on September 14th, he entered the City of Mexico with fewer than 6,000 men.

But—and here is a great big but,—but for a defect in legislation at Washington we would have captured the City of Mexico with-

out resistance, directly after the battle of Cerro Gordo, saving thousands of heroic lives and enormous expenditures of money. This particular exhibition of inefficiency is wholly chargeable to Congress. Yet, even now, when an army officer goes before that body and asks for essential betterments, he may be met with the insinuation of selfish lobbying for personal advancement.

However, we won't cry over spilt milk. But you and I, and the folks back home, must see that such blunders do not occur in the future.



## XXI

## OPENING THE CIVIL WAR

At the beginning of the War of 1812, as you remember, we maintained no regular army. We started from the bottom and built new to the top. Volunteers and militia found no grizzled veterans to show them what to do, or to set the pace for obedience and efficiency. Throughout the Mexican War our regulars not only bore the brunt of fighting, and sustained the heaviest losses, but they furnished

able commanders to the militia and to the volunteers, holding up magnificent examples of skill, fortitude and courage.

After the Mexican War Congress immediately reduced the army from 30,890 men to 10,320. Here we have the same old policy of dismissing our trained soldiers the minute fighting time had passed. When we wanted them again, mighty bad and mighty quick, we didn't have any. Congress has always figured that a considerate enemy would always permit us an abundance of leisure to begin preparations after the actual fighting has commenced—plenty of time to apply for insurance after the house catches fire.

Therefore, at the close of 1860, with a population of 31,000,000 and 3,000,000 square miles of territory, we were practically destitute of military force. The regular army in fact numbered 16,367, scattered along our interminable frontiers, stationed at isolated western posts, and guarding the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Florida. Imagine try-

ing to cover the Sahara Desert with a dime's worth of butter.

And, considering what happened during the Civil War from a strictly military viewpoint, we find that our standards of comparison are wholly different from those of previous wars, for here the great bulk of soldiers on both sides were raw recruits at the beginning. On both sides, however, they got such a hard and continuous service as to weld them into iron veterans, equal to the Old Guard of Napoleon. So I shall merely give a few instances to prove that the same faults and inefficiencies observable from Revolutionary times had not disappeared.

On March 26, 1861, the Confederate President called for 100,000 men to take the field for the period of one year under his unquestioned and supreme command. The few United States regulars were scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, too far away to participate in the first shock of arms. President Lincoln, of course, called for militia, President and Cabinet showing a fatuous con-

fidence in raw troops, wholly unshaken by all their feeble tragedies. There was nothing else to do. Regulars simply did not exist.

The first Federal call was for 75,000 militia to serve a period of three months. In the light of history it is almost incredible that the Federal Government should attempt the reconquest of 560,000 miles of Southern territory, with raw recruits, and in the brief space of three months. The South, as I am reliably informed, likewise did a little supposing, that one Southerner could lick ten Yankees, and the war would be a brief and happy picnic.

Here's an example: The District of Columbia was called upon to supply ten companies. All but three of these companies mustered into the service for three months, with the stipulation to serve *within* the District, and not to go out of it. As a matter of fact many of these men afterwards served outside of the District without protest; I mention the incident merely to prove the rule,

that it is only raw troops who presume to dictate to their lawful commanders.

In the North volunteers rushed to arms in numbers far exceeding the needs of the government.

Both the Union and Confederacy repeated the blunder of short enlistments. Confederate troops began pouring into Virginia and moving towards the Potomac. Washington City was practically in a state of siege. Owing to the weakness of the Federal military system, President Lincoln made of himself a virtual dictator, and assumed to exercise the war powers of Congress. By proclamation on the 3rd of May he increased the land and naval forces by more than 80,000 men.

My son, folks in this country do a lot of gossiping about military dictatorships which might result from a competent standing army. Dictatorships do not come that way. Twice in similar circumstances, when Congress has been too feeble or negligent to provide a competent national defense, dictatorial powers were conferred upon George

Washington; and now Lincoln assumed them himself. Thus we see a President who had sworn to defend and protect the Constitution, knowingly overriding the law to save the Union.

When Congress assembled in extra session on July 4, 1861, it found that its power to "raise and support armies" had already been exercised by the President to the extent of 230,000 men, an usurpation which met with the approval of Congress and the people.

## XXII

## WHAT OF THE REGULARS?

At the outset there was considerable discussion as to what should be done with the regular army, whether it were not wise to abolish it altogether, and assign the trained officers to such duties with volunteer regiments as their talents fitted them to discharge. But as the volunteers themselves began to get a smattering of kindergarten tactics, when they learned to distinguish

which end of a musket should properly be held to the shoulder, they concluded that they could get along without West Point dudes to chaperon their martial activities.

As a curious bit of history: In 1861 a certain U. S. Grant volunteered the service of his military education, but no notice was ever taken of it. His letter was not thought of sufficient importance to be preserved.

Five weeks later, placed at the head of a regiment by Governor Yates of Illinois, he began the career which led to supreme command of the Union army and to the Presidency.

At this time there were 741 graduates of the Military Academy. 168 Southern officers resigned and went to their home states, while 92 ex-graduates, who had gone out of the service in 1861, also joined the Confederacy, providing the Southern army with 260 trained officers.

Five hundred and fifty-six West Pointers remained with the Union, while 102 ex-graduates reëntered service, thus giving the Fed-

eral Government 658 educated soldiers to direct its campaigns.

Singularly enough the operations immediately prior to the first battle of Bull Run presented the same difficulties as those which destroyed the ill-starred Montgomery at his assault upon Quebec—the Union commander's plans were disarranged by the impending dissolution of his army because of short-term enlistments. On June 16th, Gen. Patterson, commanding the Army of the Shenandoah, advanced within ten miles of Winchester, Va., then occupied by the Confederates. From that point he wrote: "I have to report that the term of service of a very large portion of this force will expire in a few days. From the undercurrent of feeling I am confident that many will be inclined to lay down their arms on the day their time expires. Active operations towards Winchester cannot be thought of until they are replaced by three-year men."

A few days later, having transferred his forces to Charlestown, near Harpers Ferry,

Patterson telegraphed the Adjutant General: "With the existing feeling and determination of the three-months men to return home, it would be ruinous to advance or even to stay here."

The three-months volunteers expressed determination not to serve one hour after their time expired. General Patterson began a movement to the front, and was assailed with earnest remonstrances against being detained beyond their terms of service. Even if he should capture Winchester he would be without men, and compelled to retreat. He appealed to the regiments to stand by their country for a week or ten days. History was repeating itself, as Col. Biddle subsequently testified. General Patterson had seen precisely the same thing happen to General Scott at Puebla, Mexico. After making fruitless appeals to his men, one-half to two-thirds of them refused to remain. Three days afterwards, July 21, 1861, on the morning of the battle of Bull Run, while the Secretary of War and the commanding General vainly im-

plored them, a regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery whose time had expired began their homeward march to the sound of the enemy's guns. That same day the Federal army was totally defeated.

Standing like a guide post above the rout, discipline and organization again proved their value. The battalion of regulars which covered the retreat was last to leave the field, checked the enemy's pursuit, and retired in perfect order. According to official reports, all of the Federal troops, except 800, were volunteers and militia. Some of the volunteers had been mustered into the service less than a month. The time of service of all the regiments of militia was about to expire. Any educated officers, knowing these conditions, must have seen the inevitable defeat which occurred at Bull Run.

There was no such thing as discipline. General Heintzleman, after passionate failures to rally his broken regiments, expressed himself as to their conduct: "The want of discipline in these regiments was so great

that most of the men would run from fifty to several hundred yards to the rear and continue to fire,—fortunately for the braver ones —very high in the air.''

The Confederate forces were estimated at 29,949, and the Federals at 28,568.

Military men now say, quite impartially, that a well trained army, half the size of either, could probably have beaten them both combined.

## XXIII

## THE CONFEDERACY FIRST SEES THE LIGHT

VOLUNTEERS will never provide a certain and dependable supply of man-power to maintain a long war. It's like this: On the first chill day of winter you start your furnace to warm the house. It won't do just to light a fire, throw on some coal, slam the furnace door and let her heat up. That might be all sufficient if the cold spell only lasted a couple of hours. But the winter runs on, and bliz-

zards get worse. To keep that furnace going full blast you must have plenty more coal, right handy in your cellar. No man is fool enough to light one fire, then sit down and depend upon voluntary contributions of coal that the neighbors may send in. Not much! Your full supply must be steady, reliable, convenient—where it may be shoveled into the proper place at the proper time.

It's exactly like that with an army during a protracted war—you must *know* where the supply of man-power is coming from. Volunteers will never maintain a uniform supply of the numbers needed and, above all, *when needed.*

At the opening of the Civil War, both the Union and Confederate governments pursued the same temporizing and uncertain policy of relying upon voluntary enlistments for short terms. After the Confederate defeat at Fort Donelson, the evacuation of Kentucky and Tennessee, and the battle of Shiloh, the Confederate Congress first displayed to the world the full meaning and extent of the pow-

er to "raise and support armies." By act of April 16, 1862, the Confederate States totally abandoned the principle of voluntary enlistment, authorizing President Davis to call out and place in the military service all white men between the ages of 18 and 35. The draft had already been adopted by the State of Virginia in February, 1862, with the effect of immediately adding nearly 30,000 men to the Virginia contingent. Conscripts were fitted into old organizations, and three months' drilling made them effective.

This Confederate Act of 1862, was, apparently, the first declaration on this continent of equal and universal military service. One year later the Federal Congress was forced into the same policy by declaring every man between 18 and 35 to be a soldier. Every well-informed American knows the result of this legislation, North and South. It filled the army, and kept men continuously in the field, until long service and habits of steady obedience transformed raw and rabbit-legged recruits into veterans, as capable and efficient

as ever shouldered a musket. The same faint-hearted individuals who fled from the first battle of Bull Run, afterwards became the sturdiest troops who were finally victorious at Appomattox.

In passing let us note a singular and significant state of affairs. The South stood largely upon the doctrine of States Rights, which the North repudiated. Yet during the second period of the war, the Union fought as a co-partnership of States, while the Confederacy fought as a nation. The Union appealed to the States, adhered to voluntary enlistments, and left the Governors with power to appoint commissioned officers. The Confederacy appealed directly to the people, President Davis appointed the officers, they abandoned voluntary enlistment, and first adopted the republican principle that every citizen owes his country military service.

To illustrate the extravagant use of men under this haphazard volunteer system, and as a fact interesting in itself, it may be mentioned that in 1861 the total force of the

Federal Government exceeded the total field army of Germany by nearly 120,000 men. Our infantry of volunteer forces exceeded the Russian field army on a war footing by 237 battalions. Our cavalry, which was practically useless until 1863, exceeded the total cavalry of the Russian regular army by 965 squadrons. Of course we saved money in times of peace, but in war times we spent by billions, when it was too late, and got nothing for it.

## XXIV

## DEMAGOGUES AND DISSENSION

1862 was a period of confusion and turmoil. Cabals, intrigues and wirepulling permeated every department at Washington, spreading dissension, insubordination and distrust amongst the army. Efforts of commanding officers were neutralized and change followed change. As an instance: General Burnside, when at the head of the Army of the Potomac, resolved to suppress insubordination, and

had actually written out General Orders No. 8, dismissing from the service Generals Hooker, Brooks, Cochrane and Newton. Instead, however, of publishing these orders Burnside went to Washington to confer with the President. As an outcome of their interview Lincoln relieved Burnside of command, and appointed Hooker, in this characteristic letter:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
Washington, D. C.,
January 26, 1863.

MAJOR-GENERAL HOOKER:

*General:*

I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appears to me to be sufficient reason, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things with regard to which I am not satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in your-

self, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard in such a way as to believe it, of your recent saying, that both the army and the Government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain success can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The Government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more or less than it will do for all commanders. I much fear the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you so far as I

can to put it down. Neither you, nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Politics and demagoguery contributed their sinister influence to weaken the forces in the field. It grew and blossomed and bore evil fruit. Various states assumed the care of their own sick and wounded by sending agents to the front and bringing home the soldiers, causing hundreds of deaths, against the advice and over the protest of military surgeons. Thousands of men who were slightly ill, and thousands of malingerers, were provided an easy means to get entirely out of the service. Had they remained at the front, in care of regimental surgeons, most of them would have been returned to duty in a few days.

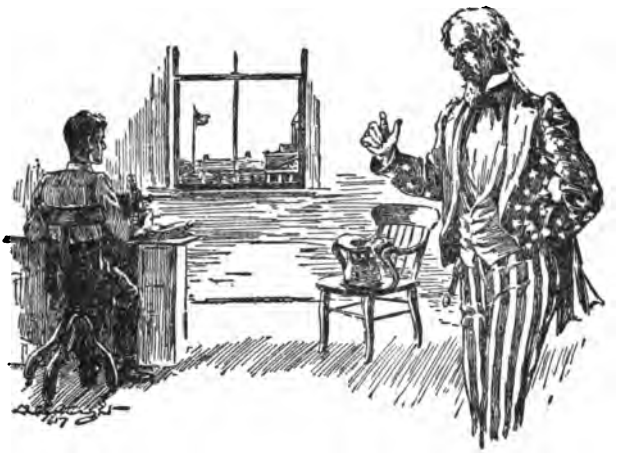
Politicians, anxious to curry favor and make votes, withdrew soldiers from the breastworks to be used at the polls.

Once safely at home, if a man wanted to stay there, he could secure a discharge by getting any physician "in good standing" to sign a certificate of disability. And these certificates soon acquired a commercial value—as was inevitable under the temptation. Militiamen learned the art of feigning every disease suggested by patent medicine advertisements. Impositions became so frequent that discharges for rheumatics were absolutely barred—that was too easy. Records of the War Department show that disability certificates were subjects of barter and sale. Medical officers of character and patriotism were exposed to every kind of bribery. Thousands and thousands of men never returned to the ranks. General McClellan mentioned a single regiment, which sent 506 men to the rear, of whom only 15 or 20 reported again for duty. By reason of "chronic absenteeism" and de-

sertion, the Federal army at Antietam had 101,756 absentees, with 87,164 present.

Out of a certain army corps 13,000 were in ranks, while 15,000 were absent. Not more than one-tenth of the sick who were left behind ever rejoined their regiments.

My son, listen to your Uncle Samuel, and get this straight. I am not trying to hurt anybody's feelings, but merely showing you how a bad system can destroy the usefulness of good men. Much of this was caused by a state hospital system, which grew out of politics, and politics won't mix with soldiering.



## XXV

## TO OUR MISTAUGHT MILLIONS

Now, let's put the Civil War behind us—except for its lesson. We've got a mighty uncivil war ahead of us which demands attention.

I want all the mistaught and misled millions of this nation to know at least part of the reasons why we chucked that old volunteer system into the junk heap. Every mother and father in this country, when their

son goes off to war, has got a right to know. I believe in explaining things. Folks might think that we are sending their boys across the ocean to fight some other fellow's war. That's not so. This is *our* war. It was *our* war from the very beginning, but we didn't see it, not then.

Five hundred years ago the English people bluffed and bulldozed their Magna Charta out of King John, which laid the foundation of British liberty, and the foundation of American responsibility in the present struggle. Five hundred years is a long distance to travel backwards. It's true, just the same. But a great Big Idea started then, and has been traveling forward ever since. Afterwards the English secured the Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights, and other guarantees of personal liberty. We brought those same rights with us to America, and we think a heap of 'em. They're what built our government. I've been finding some faults with our Government—but you can bet your bottom dollar I love it. Pretty soon that Big Idea

spread over the entire western hemisphere, and became firmly imbedded in most of the older countries. It means that every fellow must have an equal show—a fair shake, a square deal, a chance for his white alley. Do I put it plain? We Americans are powerful sot in our notion of sticking to that Big Idea. We won't give it up, not without a fight.

About the time our forefathers were signing the Declaration of Independence, and defending it, Frederick the Great, of Prussia, was lifting his obscure kingdom to the position of a world power, based upon a totally different idea, the Divine Right of Kings, the right of a solitary man to rule other men whether they want him to or not. Sometimes it was more fun for Frederick when they didn't want him. The Divine Right of Kings likes to boss the plain folks, keep 'em down, beat 'em down—and then make 'em love it.

Frederick built, Bismarck perfected, and the present Emperor William II said at Frankfort that his "grandfather had by his own right placed upon his head the crown of

the kings of Prussia," and that he was responsible to no man, to no legislative body, to no gathering of the people, and he didn't care a rap whether folks liked it or not. That was his way of doing, and he had the army behind him.

That's all right, if a man gets away with it, and holds his job; he will build the strongest possible government, for a despot centers in his own hand all the legislative and executive powers. At his nod war is declared, the army is launched, and the cannons roar. It is a marvelously, terribly, brutally efficient scheme of running a government. It can *do* things—do them right now.

We Americans are mighty proud of the fact that our Declaration of Independence, and our Constitution have become a pattern for nearly all the world—all that part of the world which is not controlled by the Prussian Idea. New republics, springing up in every quarter of the globe, have followed our lead. We stand *for* that Big Idea, and we have to

stand *by* it—that common folks have some rights, which even emperors must respect.

"My will is the supreme law!" so proclaimeth the German Kaiser.

"All power is derived from the people!" which the republics of this earth are pledged to maintain—or they die. Don't you see that the Prussian Idea and the American Idea can never march down the big road together, side by side, and at peace? Both of us are now in the big road. One or the other has to get out. That's all there is about it.

Once upon a time old Abe Lincoln said: "This nation cannot endure half-slave, half-free"—*nor can the world.* Some folks say we ought to stand aside and let Europe fight it out. Stand aside? Where? There's no place for us to stand without stepping off the earth.

Before we are done with it, I look for a grand alliance, a brotherhood of all the republics of the world, marching magnificently, shoulder to shoulder, with clear eye and

steady tread, moving forward, forward, forward, to the final triumph of mankind.

Did you ever hear this piece of poetry by a country editor in Mississippi?

"Onward, upward, press the peoples
To that pure, exalted plane,
Where no throne shall cast a shadow
And no slave shall wear a chain.

"They are lighting fires of freedom
On a million altar stones,
With the torches they have kindled
At the blaze of burning thrones."

We couldn't keep our hands off this war. This war would not keep hands off us. I'm perfectly willing to hoe my own row, and let the other fellow hoe his. But Divine Right wants to cultivate the whole field, and makes no bones about it. I'm nothing but a hard-headed, striped-pants Yankee, but some facts are so plain that you can't shut your eyes to 'em. If we sit down, with both hands in our pockets, and let Divine Right organize all Eu-

rope, 'twon't be long before Europe gets too small for their Welt Politik or World Kultur —whatever they call it. They say it's better for us—like Belgium—to have Divine Right straddling our necks—then we can tote a heap bigger skillet-load of Efficiency. Of course, it cuts no ice with Divine Right, whether that suits us or not.

So, you see, the Prussian military idea must be destroyed by democracy, or it will destroy all democracy. Now, as we've got to fight, we'd better go in strong while we have allies, rather than wait and fight it out alone. Doesn't that sound to you like hoss sense?

And, mind you, I say this in the most profound conviction, we are bound to win that war on the soil of Europe, or we may expect to lose it on the soil of America. There's no way of sidestepping. We've got to roll up our sleeves and make the world so free that a couple of emperors can't whisper to each other and touch the button for a war that has already slaughtered forty-five millions of hu-

man beings—folks like you and me and wives and babies.

We are too deep in this war, and are going to make a business of it. It takes soldiers to fight battles, preachers to preach sermons, and jawsmiths to wrangle before justices of the peace.

We've got to turn out soldiers. I want my boy in khaki to be just a little better than any boy that our allies can send—better trained, better equipped, a better shot and better paid. I can't bear the idea of sending a single brave lad over there into a deadly peril that he knows nothing about. That's rank murder, as old Light Horse Harry said.

I have been trying to make you understand the difference between soldiers and raw recruits. A raw recruit is of no more use in the trenches of France than a left-handed blacksmith in a watchmaker's shop—strong and willing, but liable to smash things.

## XXVI

## THE WORK OF WARSMITHS

THOUSANDS of years ago every able-bodied man was naturally a soldier; now he is not, not by a jugful. When primeval men contended amongst themselves, they used the same weapons with which they fought the beasts—the stone ax, and the club, which fitted easily to their hands. In their tribal conflicts any group of men, however hastily assembled, constituted an army, employing

the same simple weapons and requiring no discipline or tactics. Through the evolutionary processes of time, special weapons were devised by men for use against men. As these implements became more and more elaborate, they necessitated a greater and greater education in their use. War has now evolved into a science, most complex, many-sided, and embracing practically all the other sciences. As instruments of warfare become more and more intricate, volunteer forces become less and less efficient.

In this complicated and highly specialized modern warfare, it requires a regular army of seasoned and disciplined troops to defend our country. In the tribal ages there were no standing armies and no peace; every male was a soldier, to be called upon at any moment, waiting with weapons ready. The entire nation stood always in martial array. When gunpowder was invented, war was becoming a profession, and men must be especially educated for it. A small fraction of the male population was then set aside for

soldiers, leaving merchants, artisans and farmers to pursue the arts of peace. Commerce flourished, universities sprang up, and civilization throbbed at the pulses of the world.

To-day, with the submarine, the aeroplane, huge cannon, abstruse mathematical calculations of range, electrical appliances, scientific explosives—the thousand and one inventions now adapted to the trade of war—to-day it is quite inconceivable for a raw recruit to be of the slightest service. We must have men who know exactly what they are doing, else our republic passes into ancient history with the graves of Greece and the ruins of fallen Rome.

Yet, in spite of this, some residue of prejudice yet remains against a powerful standing army, it being feared as a tool that might be used by selfish ambition. In the old countries standing armies originally flaunted the banners of great feudal houses—Bourbon, Hohenzollern, Romanoff, Hapsburg. But the free soldiers of a Republic, fathers, brothers,

sons of the people, created by the people and responsible to the people—such an army in a pure democracy must prove the bulwark, the safeguard, and not a menace to the state.

All these considerations, and a blamed sight more, kept buzzing around in my head, and absolutely convinced me that our old come-and-go-as-you-please volunteer militia wouldn't do. The shamefullest crime is against the boys themselves—putting them up to be shot down without a chance. Suppose you run over some day and see those youngsters drilling at Fort Myer. The eternal sunshine never lighted up a finer lot of faces, frank of soul, clean of heart and stout of limb. You can't chuck a brick bat in that crowd anywhere and hit a boy that you wouldn't trust. They are *good* boys, they are *my* boys, and by the grace o' God I'm going to give 'em a chance. If I do my part, they'll do the rest. And the best way to fix that is by the Selective Draft—we've got it on the statute books right now. But we also have in these United States a system of Selective

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